



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 41.

Price, Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL AT PAINTED ROCK

OR  
AFTER THE HUMAN BUZZARDS



BY  
THE AUTHOR OF  
"BUFFALO BILL"

ONE BY ONE THE BUZZARDS WERE OVERWHELMED BY THE RUSHING WATER UNTIL AT LAST DUSENBURRY ALONE WAS VISIBLE.





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## BUFFALO BILL AT PAINTED ROCK;

OR,

### After the Human Buzzards.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A THREE-CORNERED GAME.

Buffalo Bill and a trio of pards, Wild Bill, Texas Jack and a Crow Indian, were on the trail of the Human Buzzards, the worst band of outlaws that ever infested a border country. Once before Buffalo Bill had encountered the Buzzards, and almost wiped them from the face of the earth, but their leader, Chiltorn, an Englishman, had escaped, and had soon recruited his band again to its full strength.

Buffalo Bill, hearing of this, had taken the trail after the Buzzards, followed by a band of well-armed citizens of Goldeena. These men marched on foot.

The Buzzards, who once before had burned Goldeena almost to the ground in a raid, had recently carried off all their horses.

They were, consequently, thirsting for vengeance upon the outlaws.

The advance scouts of Buffalo Bill's party were on the stagecoach trail, just as a coach, bound west, came in sight with a full load of passengers, and pursued by a band of Indians, who were hidden from the passengers by a cloud of dust which enveloped them.

That the band of Buzzards were also near, watching for the coming coach and its rich freight, the scouts did not then suspect.

Chiltorn, the Demon Man Killer, and his outlaw herd saw the Indians, and decided that they would allow the Indians and passengers to fight it out.

"Then," said their leader, "we can swoop down on the victors. The Indians will obey us because we have the totem of their tribe."



This sacred totem had been captured on a previous raid by the Buzzards.

But Tom Turmoil, who stole it from the Indians, had nearly lost his life in doing so.

But neither the Bad People, as the marauding Indians were called, nor the Buzzards suspected that Buffalo Bill and his comrades were watching and waiting for their time of action, and in hiding near the scene where the attack on the coach must be made.

A breeze following the coach already enveloped it and the plain around with clouds of white dust, which hid all from view, and was favorable to the scouts.

It was a game of watching and waiting until the time came for deadly action, the Bad People against the coach, the scouts against the Indians, and the latter with the Buzzards.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HUMAN WOLVES.

The quick eye of Clint Burdsall, the driver of the coach, ever on the alert for danger, saw in a lift of the dust cloud for an instant, other clouds upon each side, and keeping even with his coach.

At once Driver Burdsall set his team agoing. The passengers on the coach were a party of Welsh miners on their way to mines in the Far West.

Their spokesman asked the driver why he had increased the speed of his horses.

"Do you see those clouds of dust?" asked Clint.

"Yes."

"They conceal Indians."

"The man says these are Indians," interpreted the spokesman to those on the top, while one of them repeated the terse explanation to those inside.

The Welshmen were overhauling some Sheffield revolvers of the bulldog pattern, which might not do in a saloon for fancy shooting, but, close to, would make deadly havoc.

A fearful yell, the warwhoop of the Sioux, sounded to the rear; on both sides the two companies of In-

dians galloped to unite, confer with the chiefs for final orders, and dash at the coach from a number of points at once, in order to confuse the defenders.

They had not imagined from these stout men, who, in their dust-coats, looked like corpulent citizens, such a reception as they got.

For newcomers, they stood this war cry very well.

"Don't forgit," said the driver, "to clap the shooter to my ear, and let her rip, if we lose the day. These are Sioux, the worst stripe, and I don't want them to hev the handling of me when the battle is over. See?"

The Englishman next to him on the whiphand nodded.

"Thar is a prejudice out here for a white man to keep his hair on to be buried. But I reckon you will want all your cartridges to guard your own," muttered Clint.

The station dotted up a little beyond, over a slight roll.

"If we reach that 'ere little house," said Burdsall, to give his passengers some hope, "we may stand 'em off—they are awfully skeered to keep up a siege, as this is no desert, mind, and the sogers or rustlers will happen along."

The brakes were off, the lines were let out just right and the whip cracked. The horses had shivered when they heard the warwhoop. The smell of 'Indians and Indians' horses always affects domestic animals. These three span were in a fever when thus they got the hint to "get up and dust."

"Get ap!" roared Burdsall, so different from the dry, measured voice in which he told stories.

These foreigners may have had some experience in English stages on a macadam road. But, though a good pace is kept there, it was nothing to that in which the alarmed horses started. They went by leaps and bounds, and at the first pull out, "snatched" the vehicle from the flight of arrows and bullets.

Two young braves had dashed forward, thinking to cut down the leaders, but this sudden spring, upset them, literally. One was knocked out of the sad-



dle, and rolled in the sands, laughed at by his friends, who enjoyed any cruel mishap. The other, thrown on the second span, was let fall between them to the ground. The coach gave a high hump as the wheels rebounded off his body.

"Save the pieces!" shouted the driver. "Stretch yerselves and light out. Ef you can't drop Injin hosses, then you are a discredit to your rearin'! Mosey—zip! the company pays breakage! oh, will you break yer backs?"

For only a few minutes did the race continue. Burdsall soon perceived that something wrong had happened at the station.

There was a blackened spot where the station had been wiped out by the Indians some time before, the road strewn with the fragments of the keeper's few household effects, the blood splashes, the council fire—quite enough for him to divine that those who pursued him had settled with the station before they went to meet and make the surround of his coach.

Oppressed by discouragement, he must have pulled in the lines, for the horses relaxed their strides, though scared. The Indian arrows flew with good aim through the swirling clouds of saline dust, red earth in powder and the crushed limestone rock, all hot from the sun, which almost melted the metal in the mountains.

All but suffocated, the Welshmen fired at random at the dark figures, which formed a moving ring around them, and lanced at them with spears, or returned their fire.

One of them leaned out from his pony and cut the traces of the near horse of the middle team. This brought all to a halt in a few more turns of the wheels. Sunk in the sand, they were effectually blocked.

Clint laid his aggressor out promptly.

"Hinder my hosses?" he cried, angrily.

He let out his long whip with the skill of the Western stage driver, and with uncommon force. The snakelike lash curled round and round the Sioux's neck and face, and the flicker snapped in his eyes.

He sent out a cry of agony, and, the lash still holding, he was yanked out of the saddle, and hurled among the bunched horses' hoofs. They were dancing like deer on a coiled serpent. This made the third Indian whom they had trampled and cut to pieces.

In the meantime the Sioux came down in a mass as the vehicle finally stopped. In their excited love of the hunt and the expectation of slaughter, they were blind and deaf to the warning of a group of their own who kept out of the chase.

These, to the number of ten, acted as a reserve.

That guard, drawn off the road on a butte, where the Medicine Rock may have stood, saw the Buzzards in more than one place and gave the alarm, but uselessly.

Their friends had their hands full with the stage passengers.

While Clinton Burdsall lashed the Sioux, as soon as the vehicle stopped, these Welsh miners on the top, who were not too badly wounded, tumbled down and joined their mates who had already stepped out upon the ground—some one side, some the other. But all were armed, and all were inspirited with the same determination to show that they had lost nothing of their bravery because they had to fight on the plains of the Platte.

The peaceful conveyance, for once, vomited armed men, and the Indians recoiled, dashed for the instant.

These chunky, burly men, with square, hard faces, were resolved to sell their lives dearly.

Seeing this bold front, Clint, though hit, fired a Mexican blunderbuss at the reds, and, under cover of its smoke, got down, cut the traces of the horses to add to the confusion, and, perhaps, let one or two get clear to carry the news of the disaster to the first stables they might reach. Then, holding this knife in his hand, he took out a large revolver with his other—for Clint was left-handed—and blazed away.

"Ha, ha!" cried he, in reply to the taunting yells of the attackers, "tackled the wrong kind of cat. You are not going to hitch us to the tails of your war-



ponies and plow the dust with us this trip. Go it, my British friends; I'll eat my boots before I ever say a hard word against your country. You weren't sociable wuth a cent, but the style in which you use them played-out kind o' shooters makes me warm to'ard ye. Let 'em have it! if only because they have massacred poor old Bob, that never did ill to none and always had a cup of hot coffee for the busted miner creeping back to the railroad line for another send-off."

The Welsh did not half-understand his words, but his actions were too much like theirs not to make him their brother.

Astounded at being met so intrepidly, and with holes in their ranks, the Indians bore back a little.

"This is our chance," said Burdsall; "if we can't git inside that house, we may still stand them off. One of the hosses, I think, has taken to the road, and will give the alarm."

It was not bad advice, for the coach, with only its leather blinds, would not hold out long, converted into a fort. The plains Indians, too, are loath to enter houses and often content themselves with a volley in at the window before galloping off in baffled spite.

But the Welshmen were not willing to leave their wounded to the savages, of whose cruelty they had, if possible, an exaggerated idea.

When Clint made his rush, after firing his last shot, but one, at the redskin charging down nearest, he was unaccompanied. Half-way to the station, a gleam of hope lit up his agonized visage. He had seen the Buzzards.

He did not like their looks, but, in such straits, a man does not doubt his own color will side with him.

"Hurrah for our folks!" he shouted, with his remaining breath. "Come on, for they are half-licked and another player taking a hand will flax them."

The Buzzards sat their horses as statues might, and all their gaze was directed to the back of the house.

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Clint, stopping, though he knew a red horseman or two were at his heels; "they are white—they hear me, and they don't pay a least bit of 'tention."

"We are the Buzzards of the Boneyard," one of the strange cavalry deigned to reply to the disappointed wretch.

He felt chilled to the core.

On seeing the bandits advance out of cover, the Indians massed themselves round the coach. They had to face both ways, for the miners yet resisted.

The Welshmen were antagonists such as they had seldom met. They did not shout jests or encouraging shouts. They comforted one another with looks alone. They had exhausted all their shots. They were fighting now with terrible weapons for hand-to-hand encounters.

With mattock, pick and drill-sledge, these sons of the ancient Britons literally crushed and split whoever dared to get within stroke.

The frightened warriors drew off, and cowardly shot at them.

They had, with Burdsall's hits included, killed over twenty of the reds, and those whom they had wounded with their strange arms would never be cured by Indian surgery.

A fresh incident roused them out of the stupor into which the sanguinary stand had plunged them.

They were not given time to challenge them, for a cry of astonishment rose from the squad which was in reserve.

Tom Turmoil, having prepared the best horse for the rush, darted out of the company of his friends.

They saw one of the outlaws ride forward bearing the totem, that sacred battle flag of their tribe.

It was Tom Turmoil, Chiltorn's lieutenant, who had succeeded in stealing it some time before from the Indians.

### CHAPTER III.

TOM TURMOIL.

Buffalo Bill and his friends were around—nay, on the spot.



The scouts saw the singular action of Tom Turmoil without understanding it for a time.

Great as was the experience of Buffalo Bill, Hikok and the Crow, they had never known the totem to be carried thus by a white party.

The Crow was equally struck by surprise.

"It is the totem," he was the first to say, as Tom Turmoil drew near the unsuspected hollow. "He has stolen all that is sacred, and those who follow must kill him, though they themselves are slain."

"But, look," cried Jack; "those who are also in the rush of the fugitive's color, shoot at him, not at the reds."

He spoke the truth, for the Buzzards pretended an attack on Turmoil in order to let the reds think that they were rescuing their totem for them.

"We must shoot those white men!" cried Buffalo Bill. "All the mischief out here is caused by renegades, and those who go back on their blood."

Jack and the two Bills, crouching among the red quartzite boulders, and ferns and compass plants, commanding the gully by which solely the vale could be entered, fired alternately on the reds and the whites with splendid impartiality.

It was too late to save Tom Turmoil entirely, for already he was the butt of an almost general discharge. From both former friends and eternal enemies the missiles flew, and it was a miracle that he was not killed.

On the other hand the riders were decimated, then reduced to half their number.

Tom had turned in the saddle, wild with rage at being shot really by his own comrades, and, guessing at last that their captain had played him false, no less than he had Fly Frank. But his spine was injured, or the muscles near the middle of the back, for he let fall rifle and reins. But he reflected that the shots which flashed from the mound's center must be friendly, since they missed him and punished his slayers. He thought to place the totem in their hands rather than let his commander gain it. He whipped his horse with a flagging hand. The horse, there-

fore, following by instinct the path which the Americans had pursued, found the way into the gully. In the mouth of it, his horse received a shot or two which turned out fatal. It dropped in such a way as to block the passage.

The totem was in the power of the scouts.

But the three whites had not slackened their attack to count the gain, any more than to succor the fallen bandit, who remained on the ground near his expiring horse.

Their mission for the present was to destroy every one of the double squads of Tom's pursuers. Three who began to beat a retreat were picked off, and so the plain was animated solely by the riderless horses scurrying at random.

The dead bodies testified to the danger of approaching the hunter's fort.

As Tom and the totem were in the hollow, the Sioux, and the Buzzards at the station, were alike in ignorance of their fate.

To their eyes it seemed that Tom Turmoil had killed all the pursuers and disappeared in some sink-hole—a pit where a river plunged.

"Those were good cartridges we bought at the fort," remarked Wild Bill, "and not one has missed going off."

"Not a body moves," added Jack, while the Crow scalped those corpses which he could reach by crawling out without exposing himself to discovery.

"The Sioux are coming."

"No, Jack, they are not. Those recreant whites are holding them in check. I warrant that this rash act of the lone horseman was not a freak, but part of a plan. If the Englishman commands there, and I think I see such a figure, the Sioux will have a tougher crow to pick than we can offer here. Meantime, let us look to an explanation from this fellow."

"I am afraid that the fellow is badly plugged," said Wild Bill, as the three stood by the wounded man, while the friendly Crow watched at the gully outlet.

"Yes, and this which went through him is an



Apache arrow," said the leader, picking up a red-dened arrow.

"Running Eagle has brought some of his young men up here."

"They will wish they had staid south of the State line," returned Texas Jack; "I have some old scores to wipe off with them."

The horses of the two Sioux and of the bandit were hopelessly hurt; they had to butcher them.

When Tom saw the knife at work, he shuddered. He must have thought that it would be his turn. He was resolved to die.

"It's Tom Turmoil," said Wild Bill. "Fly Frank had not a firmer, closer friend. It was he who was the figurehead of the robber host, while the gambler played us in the town and learned who was worth stripping on the home trail. A man's a wolf who lets a wolf go. Shall I knife him?" he demanded, in a business tone.

"Don't," interposed Buffalo Bill; "I have not lost confidence in my fellowman yet, when he owes gratitude. How is he hurt?"

"Oh, he will pull through! He is tough as an old bull's hide, and he has no conscience to keep him sick abed," bitterly said Bill Hikok.

"He has boasted that he has killed ninety-nine men," went on Texas Jack. "He came out a brazen image in Carson, bragging that he had made a clean sweep of a whole family in Tennessee in the mountains somewhere——"

"It was a hot-whisky yarn, Jack," interrupted the bandit, with a better spirit since these men had pronounced his hurts not fatal. "They talk so wide of the mark in the Southwest that it takes a big liar to hold up his end."

"He offered to kill me and my deputy for an X apiece in Pat Flynn's saloon in the canteen at Fort Niobrara," said Wild Bill.

"Only gas, Bill," said the craven. "Don't ride me down, gentlemen, when I am flat in the dust, in a manner of speaking—'speshfully when you larn what I have done for you."

"A heap you have done for us."

"Yes, gents, at least, it will turn out for your benefit. I am telling the truth. I am a dead 'un—pisoned. In the rumpus when the fire broke out and swallowed up Goldeena, I must have stubbed my toe ag'in the pisoned knife of that durned sneak, Frank, the Sport, for I feel the hot blood sizzling in my

veins, and I believe that the new ruler of the roost affirms—that I shall never make old bones."

"You never got near that knife, for I had the blade trod under my boot," said Buffalo Bill.

"Ain't it rather injudicious, as a man may say, to cheer me up thus?" inquired Turmoil.

"No, for while we are disinclined to serve you, the same delicacy does not exist in Tawatsee, the Crow, and we think of retiring while he has a few minutes' conversation with you, with his scalper in hand."

Tom winced.

"Come, you won't do that. Let me be useful to you, for I see that we are all in a pretty close fix. It is a pretty fort you have here in this sun-baked desert, but when the Injins and my late comrades unite for a grand surround and drive you out, you will have to go up."

"You are away off. In the first place, the reds will not intrude.

"Not when they see that you have laid flat all the detachment which they sent after me?"

"They will lay that on your shoulders. A man who brags of having ninety-nine death-notches on his rifle stock, you know."

"They have eyes, these Sioux, and they will see the bullets never came out of one barrel."

"They will not walk into our parlor, Tom. On the flat rock yonder is a picture which will deter them. It pictures the hanging of Old Arketcheta, the Brave Soldier, and three or four of his band, and your red friends believe that the soul of a hanged man being unable to quit the body from the halter tightening, haunts the scene of the execution. Consequence is, they will not pass that memorial, and there is no other way."

"They will sit down and starve you out."

"They won't come up to see how we are thinning, for we can kill everything that comes within range. Besides, look how things grow here—we can find fat roots and live for months."

Tom glanced at the monstrous vegetation, thanks to the ceaseless moisture; pigweed as big in the flower as a sombrero, and other plants flourishing in richness. If the red buffalo were still here, the party might have stood siege for a season.

"Well, if you can defy the Sioux, it is different with the Buzzards. They would pass the real men hanging. It is not ghosts that worry them. They have each a file of spooks haunting them, I suppose."



There was a pause.

"Are the whites and the red vagabonds coming?" asked Buffalo Bill, noticing that the Indian was lively of eye.

"No," said he, reluctantly, and vexed at seeing the bandit, whom he hoped his comrades had killed as of no use to them; "they are friendly—they are going to hold a powwow. But, first, some of the robbers have slipped past the Sioux, and are watching this spot. They are puzzled how this man could have killed all his chasers so thoroughly."

"They will have more to guess in the next prize-contest," remarked Bill. "Well, Tom, you see that you are in the way. What motion do you make against our rendering you a mute and inactive witness of the little stir-up coming to pass?"

"I don't want to die, Bill. I have had a chord in my heart touched, and I feel I could do a little good before I keel over. I have a mother living, gentlemen, who, in course, little dreams that I have been kicking over the traces out here. I want to see her once more before I die, and smooth her last years. I promise you that I will go straight to Tennessee and settle down—as we understand settling down in the mountains. I will hunt and kill game for the coal miners, who do love possum for a Sunday roast, and still a little corn juice. They like that some, too."

"The appeal to the old mother is stale, Thomas. What do you offer more sensible and fresher?"

"I offer you all I possess. That box wrapped in the buffler pelts is good medicine; it is the totem of these Dog-Soldiers, the Bad People."

"Ah!"

"The totem of the Bad People," said the Crow, delighted, and his eyes glistened. "Their mystery?"

"That's about right. It was the idea of Captain Chiltorn to have me carry that off to hold the Sioux in a screw-vise. It is you who have it, as you have me, now. The Englishman would not give shucks for it, but the Injin will. You can make your own terms."

"You are selling the bear in another's hands. We have the totem, as you say, along with you. If you will lead your comrades into this gully, so that we can rid the prairie of the whole outfit, then we will let you go to your mother, or where you will."

"Betray my comrades?"

"Oh, rot!"

"But the captain has done the right thing for me. He may have been mistaken in thinking I was poisoned by Frank's toothpick, but he thought so; he went and writ a letter to my mother, and inclosed a thousand dollars."

"Thunder!" and the two Bills exchanged an amused glance.

"Yes, sir; Dusenburry, another of us, swore to the same. Now, this Dolph Dusenburry is a nigh relation of mine, and he was brung up pious—and a Band o' Hope and sich like—he would not tell a cracker over a serious matter like a mother's affection, no, gents."

"Was the letter inclosing the thousand anything like this?"

Buffalo Bill held up the letter which they had found in the scattered collection of a murdered express rider.

"I never saw it, but——"

He looked at the address, "Mrs. B. Moyle, Dickson's Center, Cumberland City, Tenn."

And, having spelled it out, he mechanically took the letter, opened it, and, reading, uttered a savage oath:

"Why, it don't inclose no order on a bank."

"Not much."

"And it says that I was hung as a hoss-thief and murderer?"

"It does so."

"And it is signed by Dusenburry and Brimfull Benner, as good friends of mine who 'tended the neck-pulling carousal, and see me walk off the barrel. What is the drift of this, gentlemen?"

"Haven't you seen enough of Chiltorn," said Texas Jack, "to know that he is an all-wool villain, who takes a relish in inflicting pain, even on the undeserving? He just wanted to strike a blow to the old woman's heart, for the pure cussedness of it."

"Besides, he calculated on making the news true. He was going to sacrifice you at the first chance."

"Yes, it looks as though he meant me to be dead poorty soon."

"He was jealous of the old pards of Fly Frank. He wants a clear board with all new men. Do you love him now, this smart successor of Frank, who does not know what fidelity to a pal means?"

"I would bury Frank's bowie in him where it would let him live longest in the worst anguish," cried Tom, with a flush of honest indignation.



"You may leave the carving of him to us, I guess. Just you entice him, and as many more as will make the proceedings, well attended under our rifles, say, up this narrow lane, and we can dispense with that celebrated bowie."

"Bill, I will."

It was not a long speech, but this time the bandit meant all he said.

"It is time you came to some arrangement," observed Wild Bill, "for here come the reds and the whites, mingled. And judging by the clatter the Indians are kicking up, don't they want their totem bad?"

"They will all get totem—red-hot," said Buffalo Bill, oiling the works of his magazine rifle while all made preparations to verify his announcement.

To an outsider, the unconcern with which they awaited the advance of the united enemies in a body was staggering. They presented a horrible and menacing face.

It was clear that the treacherous King Buzzard had made them his ardent allies against the King of the Plains.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### AT THE ROPE'S END.

Slowly, as if invincibly attracted, as soon as they discovered each other, moved the Buzzards to the wolves and hawks of the plains.

By instinct they seemed to know that they were not foes, at least for the present, but the custom must never be dropped.

On both sides robes were waved to signify that peace was intended.

The main bodies came to a halt while still the chiefs kept on.

To meet the two leaders of the Indians, Chiltorn alone offered himself. He thought, as he drew nigh to the mongrel savage from the Southwest that he had a couple of tough mouthfuls to digest.

Prairie Bear, who had a good smattering of languages, did nearly all the talking.

The Englishman held out his hand according to usage, with the palm flat, the four fingers joined.

"The King Buzzard has come to see the Bad People enjoy a good expedition," he said; "he is proud to shake hands with a warrior of the fame of the Prairie Bear. I want to have leave to punish with

my own hand the scoundrel who has dared to run off with the holy emblem of the Sioux whom you command."

Both Indians frowned, not liking the totem to be alluded to by the profane outsider.

"That is well," said the elder, after a pause; "for the thief has fled into a hallowed spot. The Indian must not pass into his refuge. The white man fears nothing—respects nothing; he can go into the home of the ghosts and drag forth thief."

"Just what I want to do. I abhor treachery," said the Englishman, with a frank smile; "it made my heart sick to have one of my men do a shameful act to my true brothers, the Sioux."

"You are not a Yankee, a trader, a soldier in blue, a hunter?" cried the old chief, rapidly.

"Nothing of the sort. I am an Englishman, and we treat the redskins the same as our color. The heart is the same—brave, bold, pitiless."

"Make the council fire," commanded the Sioux, in his own language, to the pipe bearer, his accomplice in jugglery.

Twenty paces in front of the station, a small fire was lighted, with the sticks laid in a particular manner.

Chiltorn made a sign to his men that all was well, and for the first time Dusenbury breathed freely. The number of the rovers and their arms, in good order, had made his blood chill.

Bear did not alight, but his horse was led up to the fire, where the Eagle and the Briton, dismounting, took places. The calumet was kindled, the old chief took the preliminary draw, the young one the next and handed it to the guest. He smoked with all the solemnity he could assume. He was reflecting how to bring matters round to his own wishes.

He was not sure that Tom Turmoil, having apparently slain so many of the Sioux in his flight, the new allies would detach him from the robbers. He felt easy about himself, as he was a guest, and he could not be hurt without a great stain on the party. He finished the pipe, shook out the ashes on his nail, and distributed it to the four winds, and a last pinch to the sun in honor of Running Eagle, who might have a tendency to sun worship. He restored it to the pipe-bearer, and began his address.

"I am glad to meet a friend again," he said. "When I was camping in Colorado, and I misled the troop of the Fifth Cavalry, who were hunting the



Running Eagle, I little thought I should meet him up here."

The Apache gave a start.

"Yes, I was out hunting with Texas Jack, whom you call down there the Long-Fire Bow, because he shoots well at a distance——"

"Texas Jack is an owl—the horse soldiers are mules—and the Running Eagle will yet wear their scalps," said the Southern Indian, flourishing his soap-plant stalk spear; "have I not abandoned those who, after going to the forts, came home and advised submission, because the palefaces were too many for us? I hate you all, but we want your help, you of the North, if we can put spirit in these cravens, these whipped dogs of our nation, to make a stand against the usurpers."

"That is what I have come out here for," said Captain Chiltun, boldly. It would be a grand thing for him to lead these big boys to believe that he was an emissary of the friends of the Sioux in the Canadas. "Chief, you went straight to the mark. Yes, I saved your life down there, for the cavalry would have gobbled you up."

"Good! Running Eagle knows a friend. Ingratitude is a vice for the palefaces. I will do the same for my brother—I will lay down my body for him—but," he said, with no idea of joking, "he must not make a meal of me."

"I would eat his heart only, because it is the heart of a matchless brave," responded the other, in the same vein.

"What I propose is this," went on the white man. "That villain has stolen our totem. He must die to expiate such an offense, even though he had not slain my red brothers in his flight. For some reason they must not follow him into his lair. Those reasons do not actuate me."

"The wretch must die," said the old chief; "but not as the palefaces kill—with a short, swift stroke."

And he licked his seared lips with a cracked and yellow tongue, delighting beforehand in the hope of torturing Tom Turmoil.

The subordinate chiefs were now called into the council. They formed a ring outside of that of the three big chiefs. It was clear that they had no high opinion of the bandits. But the story that Captain Chiltun had saved the Apache in Colorado had its effect. More and more of those who had held back from smoking, took their turn at the pipe. Soon all

were in line, puffing away. It was a one-voice congress.

Only one move on the suitor's part was wanting. He was to pay tribute for being on the Sioux' hunting ground. For these riff-raff treasured the legend that they had once roved across the Continent to the Missouri River; thence to the Platte, and up it to its headwaters.

Then they were courageous enough, but had since become the most cowardly and double dealing. But at the same time, the most aggressive toward their conquerors.

Only one thing more the English plotter was after—the Deadwood coach, for he thought the redskins had taken it.

Night was coming on, and there was no more than light enough to make a scout up into the mouth of the gorge. If Tom did not answer and surrender, they had not the Indians' scruples against a night attack, and they would storm his stronghold.

But why should he refuse to join his friends, since he must have counted on the Sioux going their way? The trick was done. He had the totem ready to hand over to his captain, who would assure him that the story of his having been incurably wounded by Captain Frank's envenomed blade was all a joke.

So, leaving Dusenbury to appeal to Tom, the Englishman returned to plot more deviltry that had come into his mind upon seeing in the station shed an extra coach and harness for six horses.

He believed he could send this through and pick up passengers and express packages to rob.

So Captain Chiltun from his own vile gang collected a choice company to go and plant itself on the route beyond Goldeena. Here they would treat the travelers to a second edition of the Sioux attack.

The Britisher gave a last few minutes to Dusenbury.

They had seen Tom, and parleyed with him. But he was unable to come out to them, it appeared, and the scouts had fallen back for orders.

Very likely the man had been wounded. As for the bandits and the Indians who had pursued him, he had killed every manjack of them.

"He could not have done thus unaided," said the new lieutenant, anxiously.

"Who would he get to help him?" sneered Chiltun, who did not himself like the look of the gorge after dusk. "Go in and lug him out by the ears. I



have other fish to fry, as we must make a long circuit to come out around Goldeena without exciting suspicion. I do not care so much as the Sioux do about delivering Tom to them alive; but you must haul out the totem and let them have it. They are to rendezvous with you, perhaps with me, bearing the prizes in the Sierra, near our nest. Go in and win."

Dusenburry had already learned that he was under the call and beck of one who was not pleased with slowness in obedience. He was silent, and he yielded.

They had seen Tom. The number of the bandits sent in mock chase of him agreed with the tally of the dead. If he had killed them, he was the renegade the chief pronounced him and his life was forfeit.

"Still, it is hard to turn a white man over to the reds, and that man once a companion," grumbled Dusenburry. "But orders are orders. Come on, boys, we have to pull out Turmoil, and that totem, which the Injin sot so much store on. Pack of superstitious idiots," he continued; "but I wish that they had not backed out, on the ground that this place is haunted by spooks and sich."

They gathered together for the support of one another, opposed by the gloominess of the narrow entrance into the gorge so lovely by day.

In spite of the dusk, the flat face of the painted rock displayed its curious and fantastic lines; by some natural trick, the mineral and metallic earths which the Crow chief had used to daub on the lines, glowed by their own luster. It was not hard to trace the figures, especially of the hanging ones, which seemed animated. The other heads, faces in full, with egg-shaped eyes, lolling tongues, distorted features and devilish ears sticking up like horns, also had a lifelike semblance.

The bandits raised a laugh to encourage each other, but they did not pass this stone without a shudder.

All was silent, except for the flow of water. Refreshing and rare sound in this arid desert at other times, at this dread hour the robbers heard it with fright. Water rising from the earth, so parched and rainless, and flowing around their feet. It might be said that it ran behind this rock which formed for a way the wall on one side of the channel.

They stopped, and the least alarm would have made them recoil in panic.

Fortunately, Dusenburry recognized the solitary form which in unmistakable human shape appeared in the path where it widened.

"It is Tom, only Tom!" he cried, loudly, glad to hear his own voice in the loneliness. "Come on! I say, Tom, we are not to be treated like those other fellows. We don't want to hurt you, even for shooting back on our pards, but you have got to come in. The cap says so."

To him, so soon after Chiltren had seized the reins, this was an unanswerable argument.

"Your captain is a villain, and you are another. S'pose you think to play me for a fool. You are a nice cully to forge a letter to an old woman, a-sorrer-ing for her son out in the wilderness, and announce that he had been lynched for firing a town and cutting up some bloody didoes."

"Oh, you know the cards under the table?" said the other, to gain time, while he whispered. "Make a rush at my word, boys."

"I know more than that—I know that you have all been lured into a safer trap than you and him tried to 'tice this child into."

"A trap? Your deathtrap, Tom! Sail in, boys——"

But all at once a torch blazed out near the late lieutenant of the Buzzards. And in its red glare they saw three white men leap up around him. A copper-hued shape upon the picture rock also was visible in the flare. He had a sort of bar of wood, and with it pried the immense mass on which he stood into movement. It must have been undermined by the water, diverted from its channel, for the whole was displaced as easily as though on a slide.

In another minute the rock had slipped down and blocked up the retreat. Light as a panther, the Crow Indian, for he had executed this feat, landed on the other side of the gully. He drew round to his front the rifle which he had carried in its sling upon his back. He held the rear of the bandits at his mercy.

"Buffalo Bill!"

"Wild Bill!"

"And Texas Jack," said that redoubtable worthy himself, as he had not been so promptly identified.

Their rifles were on the level toward the Buzzards' breasts as they huddled up together, unable to back



out as they came upon the heels of those whom the Crow had halted.

"We give it up," cried some of the bandits.

"You have nothing to give—your lives themselves were forfeited long ago," replied Wild Bill. "You talked about sailing in. Do your sailing. I reckon you will go to smash on the rocks in your course."

At the same instant both parties fired. Those shots on the higher ground were the more effective. When the hunters shot again, they had only their own number to go down into the bottom to grapple with. But they did not descend. They fell back under cover, dragging with them Tom Turmoil.

He had not any arms to shoot at his former comrades, but he wanted to taunt them and crow over them in their misery.

They remained in the depth, afraid to climb up forward, and unable to surmount the rolled-down rock which towered over their heads.

"The cowards," said Dusenburry, surprised that he was alive. "They have fled."

"Yes, but they have let the water in on us."

"We may well whistle blue; you are right! They want to drown us."

The triumphant war cry of the Crow Indian was all the comment.

Sensibly the cold water rose. It was at the ankle now—up to the knee a little later. One by one, the ruffians, cowed, wounded, not daring to sue for mercy again with the remembrance of destroyed Goldeena in their guilty eyes, let themselves be overwhelmed. For when they tried to clamber up out of this hole, they saw the rifles menacing them.

Dusenburry stood up to the neck alone.

"Help!" said he. "I am of your color—do not let me be choked by this icy flood afore your eyes, while that redbelly grins and yells his glee."

No answer.

"There ain't never a one of us. They have paid in the water for the fire biz over at Goldeeney. Let me up. I own that I am licked. Thunder, what more do you want of a fellow?"

"What did you plot with your new chief?"

"Why, look here, Buffler Bill, it won't make you better inclined t'ords me to tell yer. But if I must cut my own throat, I don't mind follerin' the 'zample of Turncoat Tom, and telling tales."

"Speak the truth."

"That will come rough, but here goes for a try in

a new path. The captain has made it up to send the extra coach along into Goldeeney, same as if nuthin' had happened, see? It will pick up passengers in the same old way, including parcels and 'dust' on the return, only there won't be no return, I guess."

"Ah!"

"Ah is not a patch to it. It is an oh! If only they gits the big goldbug from the East, with his pooty darter, to take seats in the stage, oh, my! how happy the cap will be."

"Oh, that is the game is it?"

"If he secures the prey, he will take the whole menagerie, Deadwood coach and all, round to our hotel in the mountains. Which you never saw the interior of, Buffler Bill."

"But I have, you sneering dog!" thundered Texas Jack, wild at having once been a prisoner to the Buzzards. "Dusenburry, you are an awful bad one. Let her go!"

"No," said Buffalo Bill, "let us draw him up. He may be useful as a giver of evidence on the trial which I see impending over that monster villain. Where is the lasso? Throw him an end, and, as he is a heavy man, all lay onto the rope and haul him into the dry air, when he shouts."

Tom offered to go down the rope, and hold the end to the almost drowning Buzzard. He had mounted a little in the tide by making a foothold of the corpses of his comrades. But Turmoil was not likely to act fairly to his accomplice in the forgery perpetrated on him.

"Chief, go you," said the leader.

The Crow nodded and took the end of the lariat. They held firmly against him, with the bight passed over the crotch of a post oak. He descended with a slowness which proved that he undertook the rescue out of obedience, not from desire to serve the outlaw.

Presently they heard, in the dip behind the ridge which preserved them from the water, a "halloa."

It was so different from the Crow's that they did not suspect it was he who had hailed them.

The fact was, on slipping down into the stream, the Buzzard received him not cordially. He preferred to lose his life than be beholden to a red nigger, to use his language. On seeing his expression of disgust, for the Indian saw with cats' eyes, and was touchy on this point, a change came over the rescuer.

It was time, for, though Dusenburry had let go his gun, he had a knife. The Indian's clashed with it,



found the way by it, and rendered his arm useless with a stab in the shoulder. Then, deftly throwing the noose over the wounded man's neck, he called out in a voice disguised by placing his hand over his lips. He swam about while the others, uniting their powers, jerked the bandit out and up the slimy bank.

"Hold hard!" cried Buffalo Bill, of a sudden. "It is as heavy as though we had the pair on the line."

They all looked over the crest and their eyes were almost on a level with the staring ones of the bandit, strangled.

"Him no warrior to die by steel and lead," said the chief, climbing out of the pit, and shaking himself like a water dog. "Him hand by the hoss rope."

"It was destined," said Buffalo Bill.

"Just so," added Texas Jack; "as our Spanish neighbors say, a dog must die a dog's death."

"You haven't any use for him, much," Tom hastened to say. "If there is any truth in what he said, and it sounds true that the captain should play this trick with the station coach, why I can do all the leading required into our cave."

"Yes, we have had a specimen of the leading you and yours afford. Only, if you try a double, Tom, you will get off no better than the late illustrious Fly Frank."

"I'll take you right into the cave."

"That is nothing to brag of," retorted Texas Jack; "you 'took me in' right enough; but I came out only to take my view through a horsehair noose."

"Well, that is settled. Hang me if I do not serve you faithful."

"Cast that body off the rope," said Buffalo Bill; "and coil it up for use. You see, Tom Turmoil, it has been broken in."

The released body of Dusenburry slid down into the water, and mingled in the mud with his luckless companions.

Verily, the lieutenants of Captain Chiltorn were faring badly. He might well shudder at the omens they were of his fate.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HOLD-UP.

Chiltorn, the captain of the Buzzards, played his card well in the makeup of the coach he intended to send through to Goldeena with his own men disguised as Indians and passengers.

He was sure that he could thus pick up, glad to get out of the ruined town, some passengers for ransom and a quantity of treasure bound for Deadwood.

If recognized as a fraud, then the bogus driver and his pretended passengers must be the sufferers.

Luke Leroy took the coach into Goldeena all right; his passengers, claiming to be English travelers, did not dismount; the horses were changed for a fresh team; a gentleman and his daughter, with others, were glad to get seats in the extra coach, which again started on its way.

Chiltorn's game had been successful.

The road outside of the blackened town was lonely, and yet Miss Mount would not let herself be dull.

It seemed her place as an American to enliven these poor wanderers over three thousand miles of ocean and two of country, after their sad and eventful experience with the original occupiers of the plains. She was as merry as a bird, and her father, not very genial, unbent, and, besides joining in the laugh, told one or two tales, which were for him pretty funny.

In the distance, set off by the Sierra, the town lights sparkled like the stars above, but soon they were dropped.

They were on the true desert.

The passengers in the conspiracy exchanged significant glances, but risked no words; they had nothing to do but wait for the stop by their comrades. If that attack did not come, they might find themselves in the wrong box at Deadwood. The driver was "wanted" there for some misdemeanors, and they had a bit of a record which would have resulted in a lynching bee if published.

Suddenly the stage came to a stop. The putting down of the brake was speedy and shook everybody up.

The explanation was quick in coming.

All heard above the din of the horses getting in a crowded-up state and kicking, a sharp, clear, stern voice:

"Halt, Mr. Driver!"

Then, on all sides, voices more harsh, but as menacing, shouted:

"Hold up your hands!"

The reply of the driver was heard, in piteous accents:

"For sure. I have stopped, h'ain't I? Don't crowd a man so!"

"Throw down your arms?" said the first voice.



The men on the outside did more than that—they scrambled down over the front wheels and went through the farce of surrendering, with a keen enjoyment of the joke of their being made to stand by their own pards, and for the first time in their lives.

Mr. Mount flung a hasty glance out of the gap by the flap which a robber held up to investigate the interior. A while before, he was ready to swear that the interminable waste was devoid of life—of any objects higher than his thumb. But a number of horsemen had popped up as from the ground, and beleaguered the vehicle. If the cactus and brush had been transformed into these riders, the change of the wilds into a peopled scene could not be more surprising.

The glance into the inside seemed to satisfy the highwayman who had peeked, for in the pause after withdrawing his head, they heard:

"Pass down the express box and mail bag, or——"

A gun or two went sharply on cock, as if late in the affray impending.

"Now, then, the booty and the beauty," said a voice, evidently the commander's.

Mr. Mount and his daughter exchanged a despairing look.

"All out!" repeated the King Bird of the Buzzards.

Without waiting for orders, and not bearing in mind that the coach contained not only valuable prizes, but their friends, the Buzzards obeyed the natural and trained impulse of such desperadoes.

They poured a volley on both sides into the conveyance.

Fortunately, Mr. Mount and his daughter were not hurt.

A stable lantern was swinging at a saddle hook. Some one lit the wick, and rode up with it.

All those within were brought forth, dead or wounded, or unhurt.

Among the latter were Mr. Mount and his child. Nevertheless, white with pallor, the poor girl presented a pitiful aspect.

"Lucky for you she is unscathed," said Chiltorn, with a black scowl. "Make haste. Pick up the hurt, remove the arms of the dead, get out the pouches of silver somewhere within, clean up, restore the lady and the other prisoners to the interior, mend the harness—and whip-ho! for our haunt in the high hills."

The orders were carried out with alacrity. Placed within, with two men, armed to the teeth, to guard

them, the coach went off again. But it took the back track for a piece. Then, leaving the stage road at a dip and by a trail which the Buzzards were sure would be without impediment up the ascent, the Deadwood coach began to climb, and climb, till it was surprising to see it poised on the height on the narrow trail, where the inner and far-projecting hubs promised to push it over into the gorge.

At length the trail was impassable for the coach; it was hidden where brought. The horses were detached, and, accompanied by the bandits bearing the prisoners, they were stabled with the robbers in the cave.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ATTACK.

The Indians had taken care to remove their dead on the horses unwounded, but the bandits remained on the bloodstained sand where they and the killed steeds had fallen. The loose horses were captured as they hovered round their fallen masters.

"We have quite a troop," remarked Buffalo Bill. "I wonder what they are fetching in the Omaha market," and they all laughed, as if in the corner of a hotel bar, with no danger pressing. Well mounted, although it is not simple to manage horses, which, after being broken in and ridden by white men, have been spoiled by the reds, the three borders horses, with the Crow Indian and Buzzard Tom, more a prisoner than a guide, journeyed toward the nest of the birds of prey.

The night came on, during which the Buzzards had waylaid the unfortunate Deadwood coach. It was splendid out here to the riders, delicious after the fierce day. The dust did not spin about if there was no dew to lay it. To the sight of these plain rovers, all was nearly as clear as by daylight.

The waste was quiet, but not altogether still.

"What is it, chief?" inquired Bill, suddenly, as, like himself, he noticed that the Crow gazed round uneasily and almost appeared to sniff suspicion.

"The prairie is alive," was the answer.

"Upon my soul, I believe you are right. Is it the Dakotas?"

The Dakotas are dogs, who are drunken with the blood they have shed. These are rovers who are concealing their presence.

"Concealing? Not much concealment, chief. A



low but steady campfire light is plain over there, just where we are trying to make our way.

"That," returned the Indian, with awe—"that is not a campfire. That is the Wizard Light."

Texas Jack shook his head.

"This gets me," he said.

"Oh, that is all right!" said Buffalo Bill; "it is an unaccountable light which flares up in odd places in the Rockies and the foothills. Some want to make it from volcanoes, like the yarn about Pike's Peak."

Plainly, the waste was troubled by more than the ordinary rangers. Animals not often seen down on the barren plains had come from the mountains. With the antelopes, their foes the wolves had hurried. They were too scared to pursue their prey, but they stopped to watch the five horsemen riding along. The track of these wild beasts reeked in the pure air.

As they went toward the "Hen and Chicks," the hills which shelter Goldeena on the east and north, and where they expected to enter the robbers' fort, the Indian fell back from scouting.

"We must 'fort' ourselves," he whispered, not with fear, but with more haste than they often saw in him.

Asked where was a commanding position before they got to the foothills, to test Turmoil's good faith, he replied that the butte they saw loom up four or five hundred yards beyond was the site of the fire, whose mystery had awed Tawatsee. It smoldered in a rocky formation, flat and sheer at the sides. He had stood a siege there, once, when Indians met him when hunting alone. The only approach might be easily defended by cutting away the vines forming a natural ladder on a flat front of hard stone.

The Crow knew nothing about it, but he went forward to investigate.

Soon they heard the peep-peep of a sand crane in a joyous tone, as if it was roused by some discovery which gave pleasure.

"The chief says it is all right," interpreted Buffalo Bill. "Come on, in single file, and keep the eye peeled. I feel a misgiving, and I shall be easier if we are cautious."

They found the Crow at the foot of a straight-up-and-down-wall of green growth, in vivid contrast with the arid plain. The immense vines must have sent down their roots into the sunken rivers, which still flow beneath the burning sands and baked rocks.

The ascent to the summit, where the level seemed

made by man with a spirit gauge, was readily effected. It was more hard to cut away the creepers, tough with age and dried on the outside by the sandstorms. This done, however, they were in an impregnable castle, high enough from the general stretch to defy horsemen. Footmen could never venture to rear ladders against that granite face and attempt to clamber up while under the rifles and small arms of those dead shots.

They owed Tom a good turn for this refuge, if really peril was hanging round.

The observatory was not lofty, but for the flatness round, they had an excellent view. On the desert all remained calm, with the exception of that ominous agitation among the birds and beasts. On the mountain was a red glow, not unlike that over Goldeena.

"What do you call that?" they inquired of Tom.

"My old comrades holding high jinks. They will never have done celebrating their little turn-up with the Goldeena fellows, I suppose."

Wild Bill was left beside the prisoner-pilot in the center of the plateau, while the other three diverged and went to spy the neighborhood from as many points of view.

Each adopted the same tactics. As they would have been defined against the lighter sky if they walked up to the edge, they went down on all fours, and finally on their chest, while still advancing over the verge, Buffalo Bill just struck his head. Under him the stone went down sheer as though quarried out. It was where they had detached the vegetation. But to his amazement, a black mass was half-way up the smooth obstacle, clinging on the crannies by toe and finger like a centipede.

"Halt!" he cried, in English, the military term being familiar to all the Indians since the soldiers harried them in the recent wars.

The figure paused, and the dark face was turned upward so that a glint of the starlight was reflected in black, snaky orbs. He took the challenge in good part. Holding on by one hand and his feet, and by a plant which he seized with teeth so white and strong as to prove that he was not civilized and had always lived on flesh, he extended the other hand. Open thus, it signified "peace."

"Dakota?" queried Bill, adding in the Sioux tongue the secret name of the nation, which few white men know, and the Indian never utters, except



on such emergencies, when identification means life or the other thing.

To his astonishment the other shook his head so energetically that he plucked out the plant by the root. Spitting the flinders of it from his lips with renewed disgust, he said, in a hissing voice:

"Crow eats Dakota."

And with his free hand, he made that imitation of flapping a wing which is the sign of the tribe to which Tawatsee, and perhaps himself, belonged.

"This takes me off my range," thought Bill.

He made a low, chuckling croak, like a crow, finding a squirrel's winter hoard. It was the signal call for Tawatsee to draw up, if in hearing.

He was, and presently the scout heard a rustling as the Indian friend crept up snakily beside him.

He poked his head over, saw the suspended man and grunted approvingly of this daring:

"What?" he demanded, in his tongue.

"Absaraka," which is the Crow's name in their own way of speaking.

"Who?"

"See-et-Eots, Nimble Thief, son of Mame-rike-ish."

"He is the son of Man-Who-Rides-Behind-Another-on-Horseback," explained the chief.

"Ali right; but it is a fine language to lock up all that in half-a-dozen syllables." So said Buffalo Bill, with his dry humor.

"Yes, I knew his father; he got the name from my carrying him off the field from the Sioux in a battle. He had his pony full of arrows in trying to rescue 'White Hat.'"

"Go on, chief; I take this young blade to be welcome."

"In the night devils borrow voices," said the Crow, carefully. Then to the Indian he said, in the same low, deep whisper used for this interrogation: "I let down rope. Tie on your arms. This is a fort. We are surrounded by foes. Wisdom preaches caution."

On the lasso reaching him, the other Crow placed in the loop his gun and scalping-knife.

It was not only evidence of trust, but of submission to his chief.

The chief examined these weapons—an old Springfield, carefully kept and the barrel bright as silver; on the stock was incised and painted a hand grabbing, the young thief's insignia; the knife handle, of elk-

horn, was also marked with the owner's own and tribal brand.

"It looks fair." He lowered the rope again, saying:

"Come up, if friend."

By help of the line, the Indian steadily rose and stood on the brink an instant; then, having cast a swift glance all round the flat butte, by which he took in all, he sank on his haunches respectfully.

This was a fine, athletic young fellow, taller than usual, but he was a Mountain Crow or River one, and was in prime fighting trim. He had no weapons but his whip. He carried a cartridge belt and powder and ball besides; a war-party man goes into action with more ammunition than three soldiers. Altogether, Bill liked the looks of this representative of the great nation which numbered four thousand, but is not half that number now, with mixed bloods included. Like the old Eastern tribes, the Crows have the good point of not killing women and children. They are about the only ones, save their Blackfeet brothers, who will charge a camp in the daytime. This one was courageous above the average.

"O Ka hee," said the Crow, commanding "Attention."

With a wave of his hand he allowed the other to retake his weapons; he was accepted.

"The news?"

"Cheveete is no more. The Master of Breath (of Life) has taken him to Him. He told the pale-faces of a gold mine. The council of chiefs pronounced a death sentence; he went out and passed over the range into the Happy Hunting Grounds on their top."

"Iron Bull dead, eh?" muttered Bill, who had caught the title.

"And you are chosen first chief," continued the young Indian, making a reverence to his chief.

The latter showed no emotion, though his pride was gratified.

"It is good. In the gathering of the chiefs is wisdom. I will be the chief."

Sitting up proudly, he proceeded in a lustier voice:

"Who leads the party, and its strength?"

"Asheeteesi-uish has with him forty Kee-Katsa (Crows) and ten or twelve Nez-Perces."

"Has He-Hunts-His-Debt got it paid yet?"

"No; he still chases the Sioux to get quits. We



came out of the mountain poor (on foot); we all have horses which we recaptured (stole)."

"Fifty men well armed and horsed," observed the chief, with sparkling eye. "I place them, like myself, under this brother's orders; for he is a great and daring leader."

"Good! I see that you have hold of my heart—love me," returned the white man. "We can do something big now."

While the young savage handed to his superior a kind of necklace of beads and animals' teeth, strung on leather so as to be a picture to the touch, "readable" in the night, which was the great chief's token, the scout reflected. In a few seconds he had a new plan in shape. It is in such rapid changes and adaptation to fresh emergencies that the whites go ahead of the reds and impress them with their superior gifts.

Tawatsee had named Buffalo Bill to his young friend, who regarded him with respect.

"This is what you shall do. Bring all the force to the base of this plateau. Have you located the Sioux?"

"Most of them are to the north and east of this rise. A few are at the other side. This ridge divides them. We were going to fall on the lesser party at daybreak and slay them all; but I struck the trail of my chief and our brothers, and I came to confer on him the rank to which none had greater claim."

"How shall we put the Sioux to flight, being one to their ten?" said the elder Crow.

"Easily enough. That is by my witchcraft. The first chief," for the first time giving the Crow the new title, "knows that we have in hand the 'Mystery Totem of the Bad People.'"

"Good!" burst from the young man, in amazement; "the totem in your hands? Impossible!"

"It will be the means of our routing the Sioux," went on Buffalo Bill, quietly. "All I ask of you, first chief, is three warriors, excellent riders, to escort this mystery into the heart of the Sioux?"

"Escort the totem? Give it back to our foes?" ejaculated Tawatsee, in astonishment. "Rather be their slave."

"Oh, you do not see the way of it! Believe me, when the Dakota see their totem coming, under protection of the spirits of their kind, they will flee

like a tribe when the smallpox breaks out among the lodges."

"Spirits?"

"Yes, I am going to transform your three young men into the likenesses of those three Sioux whom you depicted as hanging on the Painted Rock."

"Oh!" grunted the chief, partly comprehending.

He repeated the instructions and the young brave slid down by the rope, and departed to bear the chief's acceptance and orders.

The pair returned to tell their friends that the state of things had improved.

To be ready for the battle, they hauled out the provisions and ate heartily. Out in the wilderness, men eat for the nourishment, not because the hour has come round.

When the boy savage returned, it was still dark, the dawn being yet remote. He reported the joy of the war party at the renowned warrior having become the leader, and they were all eager to be moved into action. The tale that the chief had captured the Mystery of the Dakota had inspired the Crows and their Nez-Perces allies.

At the word, the little cavalcade set off.

They marched on at a slow pace, with the chest on the litter in their midst. Ere long they must have encountered the Sioux outposts, for some commotion was heard.

Then rose, as Bill had instructed, the Sioux death song:

"Hey, ah! oo oo eh, hah!"

As the tones pealed forth from the three mouths, around which seemed to play the dull flame seen about corpses of those dying an alcoholic-poison death, what wonder that the Sioux sentries forgot to use their firearms. They slunk back, and as the supposed specters still rode at them, with the Mystery Totem under their sepulchral guard, they fell back, even to the troop.

Horses were rapidly mounted, and the fugitives were panic-stricken into flight.

Those who plucked up some bravery and drew rein were promptly cut off by the Crows, stealthy in their mode of attack, who used silent weapons such as the arrow and the darted spear.

Buffalo Bill and his friends saw nothing of this. They had to judge that all would go off according to the plan.



"Come on!" he had said to his mates, as soon as the Sioux death song rose on the morning wind.

They slid down the south side of the hill, and were not long falling foul of the half-dozen Sioux who were trying to prevent them breaking through to reach Guldeena.

The scouts had no scruples about using their fire-arms, and at the first discharge reduced the enemy by half. Before they recovered from the double surprise of the peculiar noise over among their friends, and the attack, they were shot dead.

Not one was allowed to escape to carry the news.

"It is a mercy to them we have been fatal in our fire," said Texas Jack; "these Crows hate them like the devil does a prayerbook, and they would not have knocked them over outright. The new chief is bound to show the hair, and tell of torture on the captives, just to celebrate his being elected."

They returned over the butte to the scrubby wood beyond. Those Crows not still bent on the chase of the panic-stricken Sioux, and driving them away from their comrades, the bandits in the Sierra, were here assembled. They were delighted at the success of the ruse. To play such a trick with the totem was splendid in their eyes. The adventure would long be related by the campfires and in the winter villages. They greeted the white men with enthusiasm seldom seen, unless they are deeply stirred.

They asked but to be led against the Buzzards.

"We are going early to avoid the crowd," said Buffalo Bill; "the place wants some scouting before we let these screeching heathen rush into the cave. They are capable of killing all before them, and it would be an Irish method of delivering prisoners to have them butchered by our allies."

He had been won over to Turmoil's belief that the Buzzards would not fail in their scheme to carry off Mr. Mount and his daughter.

To ascertain this for a fact was a problem.

The boy savage offered to go into the cave, under pretense of being the Sioux messenger to report all was well. He knew the talk of the enemy, and the white could post him on the events transpired in the day when the Dakotas and the bandits clasped hands.

It was arranged that he should go right on, instructed by Tom, as to the way in by a pass in the south wall of the cañon, unknown to any but the robbers.

He was to have a double-barreled pistol, supplied

by Wild Bill, owner of several curiosities in that way, collected while marshal, double-charged so as to go off with a deafening bang. It was hoped that it would be heard if fired off in the cave. At this, they were to run in and try to succor him, the Crows following by that and any other inlets.

Before he made the daring move, they espied on the ledge of the gulch the mass of the stagecoach.

"What is that, Bill?" queried Texas Jack; "an elephant? Has the circus come to give a performance to the Buzzards?"

"It is—hang me if it isn't a coach?"

"Never!"

"It is the Deadwood coach," said Tom; "did I not tell you that the captain would make use of it for sure? He has made his haul. He has scooped in the Eastern millionaire and the gal, and they will never forget it, unless you are right peart in the resky."

"He will not dare——"

"To hurt them?" took up Tom. "He does not want to hurt them. He will force the old gent to sign a big check. Sho! if they was to kick, he is capable of killing her. If a lieutenant does not know what his cap is equal to, who does want to know?"

In the dawn, for the sun's rays would be long penetrating the cañon depth, where Tom led them, he took a trail so old that it was mossed over.

A little farther on, he stopped the party.

"In here, a little up, is a natural tunnel," he said. "The whole mountain is honeycombed, and seekers of white iron, as these pagans call silver, have widened the bores. Then again, the Nez-Perces whom we displaced had a go at mining for water to drink when we besieged them.

"You can go right in, Mr. Injun," he continued.

"Sooner or later you will bunk up ag'in a sentinel, for they cannot all be drunk. Then sing out: 'Buzzards,' and go on with your yarn of a message for the white chief."

See-et-Eots took the last word from his chief, and disappeared in the hole.

The white men left the Crows to guard Tom, which he did not like, for they were reeking with the carnage of the foes, and pushed on. They wanted to have a look at the coach. They had to climb up to reach the shelf, where it had been dragged by a miracle without spilling its passengers over into the fathomless gully.



Returning to where the Indians watched for the signal or the return fruitlessly of their spy, they had to pass the door which the bordermen had tried to enter by.

The sunbeams came down to where they stood, all nerves strained for the rush, when quickly upon each other the two shots from the Crow's pistol were heard in the cave.

"Reach out and gather them in!" shouted Buffalo Bill.

And he and the Crow chief, nip and tuck, darted in at the gap.

They were followed by the white men and the Crows, whooping and brandishing their arms.

The bandits were so familiar with the cavern, and their repulsing efforts so powerful, as soon as they were roused, that they drove the assailants back into the tunneled way.

In this pause Chiltourn, the chief, had crossed the hall to a compartment where he had placed Miss Mount, separate from her father.

"What is the matter?" she cried, clasping her hands.

"Nothing much. I think that you had better leave this place. I have the carriage waiting, and——"

"I shall not go without my father——"

"Quite so; very proper. I would not part you for the world. I want to live with the old gentleman. And so, I have had him led out on the hillside, where the coach awaits you and yours to command, Baron Chiltourn."

"You are not a baron——"

"And you are an abominable liar!" thundered Mr. Mount.

He had burst from between two vigorous guardians, fortified by his parental love. He was without arms, but so formidable in his just wrath that the captain was not sorry to see a couple of the Buzzards devotedly throwing themselves between, and holding their rifles against the old man's breast.

"Don't hurt him," Chiltourn hastened to cry out; "I have not done with him. We want his order on the bank. Bring him along, you two boys. He and the girl will be safer below. I am going with a keg of powder to fire a mine under those fellows."

Partly up the tunnel, which went in with an upward incline, Tawatsee found a crack in the side which knives speedily enlarged. Through this a second way was disclosed. He came along to report

that it seemed to be an inlet to the great hall, and, as he wanted his men to have a share in the long shots, he begged his paleface friends to scout up this passage, while his Indians maintained the fire.

They had not taken three steps before they learned that their departure was providential.

The keg of powder had blown up the tunnel, where they had been moving, and buried the Crows under the falling clods and stones.

The flash of flame lit them up, and the quaking of the cave shook them there.

Quickly recovering, the Indians replied to their leaders' appeals with a kind of cheer, pulled up their comrades from the cracked earth, more squeezed than hurt, and all scrambled out of the pit to enter the cave.

All the lights were blown out by the explosion in that confined space. The fire was scattered. In the gloom and smoke the contest became one of individuals.

The three scouts took little hand in the extermination of the Buzzards.

For the arch-villain, Chiltourn, had made up his mind to leave neither friend nor foe to follow him.

He had blown up the powder under the attacking party. His men had thought the time good to retreat into the cavern.

But the way was stopped. The scoundrel had cut with an ax the rope holding up a harrow of strong cedar posts, sharpened at the lower ends and running in grooves. It was, in fact, what military men call a portcullis. A sliding door. This sliding door crushed down and embedded the spiky ends in the ground—one or two of the Buzzards were caught under it, but in vain did they appeal to their cruel chief, or their comrades. If either had helped, they could have done little—the gate was jammed by the violence of its descent.

As for their fellows, they were busily engaged. Cooped up in the gallery, they were pressed by the Crows. Stifling in the powder, and, confused by the gloom, the slaughter was horrible.

Buffalo Bill and his friends went "blind," as miners say. They were lost; and it was only by accident that they came out on the gorge. Two hundred feet beneath the gap from which they burst into sunshine, a small body, seeming to be drawn by ants, was moving.

"The coach!" said Buffalo Bill, as soon as his sight



was used again to the day after straying in the cavern.

"Yes, sir, the coach," said Wild Bill, who had seen the vehicle. "Bet you a life that it contains that poor girl and her father, and that it is escorted by that infernal scoundrel with such of his coward crew as had the sense to hook it in time."

No quarter was given, and the bandits ran in vain like rabbits into every burrow.

But they died like panthers; the victory cost the Crows and Nez-Perces dear.

"Yes," said Jack, when it was learned that the body of the King Bird was not among the slain Buzzards. "He has made a break with his prizes. What is the next play?"

"I am resolved to take up this trail," said Buffalo Bill.

"It can hardly trend north to Deadwood, and I ache all over to go toward the heated region," said Jack.

"North or south, east or west, into the haunts of men, or on the plains where the centipede crawls at the prickly pear root," said Buffalo Bill, holding his bowie-knife in the air, "I swear to hunt to the death that robber and kidnaper. I will avenge that poor girl, and restore her to her friends, if living when we catch up, though this be my long, last trail."

And standing on the Sierra summit, their hands interclasped, bathed in the unrivaled sunshine of that glory-gilded land, spurning the treasures beneath their feet, they started once more on the path of duty.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BURIED MAN.

At Nelson's Ranch, where the stage to Deadwood usually watered the horses and fed the passengers, the first clew to the direction taken by Chiltorn in his flight was afforded.

One of a party who were working East, told of a coach going toward Laramie.

Later on, a broken-down emigrant family said the same strange object was going westerly, seen by them in a mirage, upside down, reflected from Iron Mountain.

The three scoured about, doing all that horse and man could.

At last they sighted the coach.

"There it is," said Buffalo Bill, rising in the stir-

rups to relieve his fatigue; "but take it slow. How odd; the driver must be drunk, and the horses look back every minute. And the passengers, who are getting their shooters ready for us—they don't seem to know which end the bullet goes out of."

Serious as was the disappointment, they could not hold a laugh on riding up to the coach. It was the extra runner to Deadwood, sure enough. But so battered and crazy from traveling the trail, and at a spasmodic pace.

If these were the Buzzards who manned the rolling fort, they had disguised themselves finely.

With their check and striped tourists' suits, such as they sell in the East for the Western tour, with fantastic mustaches and side-whiskers, they seemed a lot of Italian barbers out for an excursion.

Besides, the heap on the coach top, and half-a-dozen pale faces showing wearily at the windows, two men were on horses, poor decrepit animals at which a starving nigger would have turned up his flat nose.

One of these, spurring his nag, had the daring to come out a little way from the coach, which had halted from the horses "bunching" themselves.

Then he paused, on seeing Buffalo Bill coming at him in a dust cloud and looking, no doubt, of the ferocious sort.

The stranger, a little fat man, with a black mustache as long as his arm and almost as thick, fumbled with a horse-pistol of Revolutionary date. He had tried to wheel his horse to flee, but the animal had spied a tuft of buffalo grass, as high as its muzzle, and cropped it.

"You go away, Monsieur Road-Agent," cried this fat fellow, in a squeaky voice as well as his chattering teeth would allow. "Or, begar, I blow your out-sides in."

"What? with that thing?" retorted Bill, immensely amused, as he reined up leisurely. "The hammer is not up."

"Is zat so?" questioned the man, innocently, as he lowered his eyes to verify the discovery.

Profiting by his eyes being off him, Bill knocked the ponderous weapon out of his trembling hand, and said:

"Don't fool with tools you don't understand. What is this procession, anyhow?"

"We are peaceable voyagers," was the reply.

"You look more like organ-grinders with their



monkeys, out for a holiday," said Wild Bill, stopping beside the coach, and resting his revolver on the horn of his saddle, for there was no use for it in this cowering crowd. The foreigners explained in English as badly fractured as the coach, that they were Swiss vine-growers going to California. A party of "natives" had prevailed on them to trade their horses and outfit for this stage, assuring them that the railroad had broken down beyond Cheyenne, and that their tickets would not hold good unless they made connection at Medicine Bow in three days.

It was clearly Chiltorn and eight or ten men. The stout gentleman and the girl had not been seen in their midst when the coach was turned over to the newcomers, but one of the latter, who was evidently a lady-killer, had spied around. He asserted that, in a copse of cottonwood, he had seen something like a woman; his pressing his inquiry further had been nipped in the bud by a revolver being aimed in his direction, and a gruff voice bidding him:

"Drop that, and skip."

He had not understood the words, but the tone and gesture were ample, and he skipped.

"It looks bad for the Mounts," remarked Buffalo Bill, gravely, as the riders went back to try to strike the trail of the mounted men. "The fact was, the coach was too conspicuous in the desert. That rogue, you will see, will shake off the prisoners."

"I admit that he would snap the gent clear any time, but not till he bleeds him of all he is worth. This Chiltorn is a leech for money."

"But the girl?" said Buffalo Bill, with a shudder.

"She will have to marry him," said Texas Jack, shortly.

And wheeling, he darted back to a depression in the sands where he had been in danger of a throw.

"Come back!" he shouted in another minute.

Without stopping, he had bent down in the saddle, and picked up a piece of pine board on which were letters.

The two raced back.

"What's that?"

"Nothing much. The old story."

On the shingle was scrawled in black paint, effaced partly by time and the corroding sands: "Unknown Man, kilt by Injin."

"Yes," said Bill, "over yonder is a skull, with a wasp's nest in it. These prairies are full of such texts for sermons."

"That don't begin to be it, companion," said the Texan. "This shingle has been lately used to dig the sand with. This ink is not natural. It is a cache."

Alighting, he probed with his bowie. He was rewarded for his scent, for he unearthed some portions of black cloth, and, better than all as a means of identification, a pocketbook. It was of unusual size, and was fitted with the latest improvements, receptacles for postage stamps, checks, etc. But in gilt letters, with a slight attempt to scratch them out, visible, was the name of "Wendell Mount."

They looked round. In a wretched, stunted wood, where the sudden drying of a lake had ruined the growth, a pair of large vultures were uneasily hovering. Little birds, startled in their flight, were screaming at them from changing shelters among the twisted and hardened branches, destitute of leaves.

"There is something there," said Texas Jack, leaping on his horse.

"But alive," said Buffalo Bill, "or those birds would have been after the eyes before our coming."

They dashed up to the wood. It was not possible for a horse to enter it.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Buffalo Bill, struck by a sad idea. "It is here they have buried their victims. They were right; for it is a dismal haunt."

He flung himself off his horse, as did Wild Bill. They two left their horses to be held by Texas Jack. They went here and there. The ground had been recently disturbed, but a blanket had been trailed over it to conceal the marks.

The sand was bulged up, and a faint murmuring came from it.

"A man is buried here, but shallowly; he breathes hard and his chest has heaved up the sand."

With knife in hand, the two men, kneeling, carefully lifted the earth. They had the satisfaction of discovering the breast, then the hand, and finally the face of a man.

"Mr. Mount," cried Buffalo Bill.

"Smothered, if not done to death before the burial," said Wild Bill.

They soon had Mr. Mount on the ground beside them; he was partially disrobed. He bore no marks of injury, except some bruises and scratches from rough handling.



"He was stunned and bundled into this pit to die like a wretch entombed in a trance."

"But is he gone, Bill?"

"I think not. He wants blood-letting, for the blow was given on his head."

"He has fought and was knocked out by a dreadful whack."

While Wild Bill spoke, seeing that Buffalo Bill was doing all that was possible for the man, he looked around to see if the grave was a lonely one. He breathed again, for it appeared that the Buzzards had only waited here to disembarass themselves of the man.

Meanwhile, Bill had split up the latter's undershirt sleeve all the way, squeezed the arm, and stuck a vein with his keen knife. The blood was a long while coming. And then the drops were black. Finally it frothed with air, and wore a better hue.

"This will bring him round," said the amateur surgeon, who had, however, executed more important feats in the line.

Mount shuddered all over, opened his eyes two or three times before he was able to bear the sunlight, and at last muttered:

"My darling daughter, where are you?"

They could say nothing, being full of fears.

"Ah, I am not dead?"

"Well, no, Mr. Mount," responded Bill. "But it was near."

The gentleman began to regain his senses.

"The villains thought you were gone—at least, they buried you. Answer quick, if you can, that we may resume the search—did they attempt to kill your daughter, too?"

"No, he would not do that. Of her life she may be certain," replied the other, sitting up in Wild Bill's arms.

He spoke with a sad air, but so dazed that Bill let the blood flow still to relieve the brain before he bandaged the gash.

"Texas Jack," called out bill; "we must camp here. We must have a cup of that coffee, hot and right off; and some of that mutton, which we singed to keep the juice in, will come in well. Mr. Mount is going to take supper with us—with both legs in his grave, if he likes to make his toes comfortable in that position."

He joked to rouse up the man, whose adventure

and the parting from his daughter had saddened him almost as much as the blow on the head.

Meanwhile, Wild Bill gathered sticks for a fire, and soon had one burning. Some barberries, dried on the bush, were the flavor to the mutton, warmed up again, and the coffee was acceptable.

Mount was much better after the meal.

All was mysterious and mournful, while they listened to his story.

In the coach the threat had silenced him and his daughter, to kill the other; if one called out for help on the road. But they began to rebel, and for fear that the stage was calling too much attention, though so excellent a conveyance for the lady, Chiltorn had resolved to renounce it.

Falling across the Swiss emigrants, he had bullied them into the swap, getting fresh horses, which the Swiss had thought a good investment for their Californian enterprise.

On the horses, Mr. Mount and his daughter, unused to hard and steady riding, suffered painfully. At last he refused to go farther. He had previously refused to sign orders for money, which the outlaw chief had demanded of him.

The latter had laughed in his face, "I shall simply forge your name to them, and anything more. I have not just begun my pen work in that line, let me tell you. I am not going to marry your daughter without her money, by hook or crook. It is time to get shut of you; you are too heavy luggage for my trip with Miss Mount to my orange groves in California."

"Oh, he named California as his aim, did he?" said Texas Jack. "Then, be sure, that he is not going there. As Good Heart would say, his tongue is forked. Besides, he does not own any orange groves in California. They would be blasted the first morning he took a squint at them. That man is fit to wreck the world."

"He had murder on the brain, anyway," went on the victim. "On my refusal and his saying he could dispense with me in his plans concerning my poor daughter, I could not longer restrain my feelings. I saw, too, that it was a case of that time or never. I blamed myself for having let my consideration for my poor girl hold me so long from an effort to get both of us free."

"I seized the opportunity to give the villain a piece of my mind."



"Ugh!" grunted Wild Bill, like an old Indian, who breaks his last tooth with a bullet in the chicken's wishbone, while Jack looked his disgust at so much forbearance in a man of the millionaire's bulk.

"I tell you, gentlemen, that he must have wished his ears stuffed up. I could see that I hit home many times in the course of my protest and severe scarifying. I was going to launch a last tremendous argument, which must have brought about the release of my daughter and myself, for very shame of his scandalous behavior, when——"

"I can guess," interrupted Buffalo Bill. "One of the gang came up behind you, and let you have a chopping blow on the skull. You see, these low-grade fellows belonging to the Boss Bloodspiller's gang, they have no idea of argument."

"Yes, sir, one of them knocked me senseless. I knew no more till you revived me. It is needless to say that any expenses you incur in thus coming to my aid, and my dear——"

"You are away off this drive! We are not doing this sort of thing for money. We are going after the villains, because the plains will hump up lighter when they go up a tree—in plain English, are hanged. As for Mr. Chiltun, the book of fate is read askew by yours truly, if a page in it does not say that the forger will not present any of the papers he fills up with your signature, at a bank of San Francisco, or Portland—just whichever port he sails for. We are going to send you to Cheyenne City. It will be bright moon, and four miles yonder you will strike a hay ranch, where you can get horses' hoofs under you. Besides, do you see, you would be no use to us on the search and the march. At any moment we may be set afoot in the desert, and who knows?" he added, with a secret wink to his friends, "forced to draw lots to see who ought to supply the dinner."

The fat man shuddered; he was afraid he would be dished up, without a fair choice. He displayed no regret at parting company, but hastened off.

The three hunters settled down at the fire on being alone.

"He don't deserve such a daughter," observed Texas Jack.

"His heart is a money bag," added Wild Bill.

"He is all right, now we have snatched him from the grave. But, do not forget, that while he is swimming in wealth again, that poor girl is under the

thumb of that scoundrel. It is my first turn to lay guard. After Bill relieves, we will be on the start."

Alas! they had not reckoned on their fatigue. Men of iron, though they were, they, too, could be overtaken. And while they slept, the enemy had stampeded their horses.

The rage of the trio was inexpressible when they found themselves set afoot. In scouting, they saw the proof that the deed was done by the Buzzards. Instead of returning to get horses, they took up this trace. It led to the place where the Buzzards had camped.

Miss Mount had not lost hope. She had tied a handkerchief to a twig, which she pulled down and buried in the sand. It was not till after the bandits had gone on again that the spring of the rod lifted out of the dirt and flaunted it where the hunters should spy it.

"The girl is some!" said Texas Jack, looking at the "M." embroidered in the corner. "With such a friend in the enemy's garrison, we ought to catch up, though it is two-legs against four-legs."

At Buckskin Jem's Ranch, where some Mexicans were watching a flock of sheep, they heard they were on the right track. The robbers were reduced to six, and were making for the Green River.

"Only five of them now," said Wild Bill, that night, as he came in, tireless; "down in a ravine I have seen one of them; he was backing out, as his horse gave in, and they flung him over for fear he would be our man. He is impaled on a young pine, dead."

"Their horses are played out," said Buffalo Bill. "Look, there is another of them beat."

That night they reached the carcasses of two more horses.

"They are riding double, I think," said the ranger, "we are apace with them, though afoot."

They were in the uninhabited region of the Colorado. Nature was calm and majestic. The littleness of man was manifest; and yet the three brothers of the chase felt their spirits expand to make them equal to the frame they were inclosed in. They were the agents of justice.

Going down Green River, they found that an overflow had prevented the fugitives crossing. As they were without horses now, the woman must have been a grievous burden. They had stopped and tried to make a boat. If they had embarked, they might have a big start over the tireless pursuers.



Night came on while they were trying to pick up the trail, lost by the water side.

During the morning guard, Wild Bill went out to study a moving bush; he ran back, crying with the self-sacrifice which ruled this band of brothers:

"Save yourselves!"

And he pitched forward to lie at their feet.

No assailants charged.

"Go after them," he gasped; "you will have to excuse me from the party, as I am so weighted with lead."

They stood over him till daybreak. All was silent. The villains had turned on them at last, after lulling them into a belief that they were too cowardly to make a stand.

Wild Bill was badly wounded in three places, but not so much so as he feared.

He could not for a time use arms, that was plain. The two men built up a litter, and, without renouncing the trail, carried him between them.

Luckily, at Green River, a man and his two sons were rigging up a kind of ferry. They believed in the future, and, hearing of the railroad to cross here, were locating a home. They had seen the brigands pass; the white girl was with them. They thought the men, burned by the sun, their clothes in tatters or roughly mended, were Indians, and had tried to get speech with the girl. But they were warned off, and the party disappeared.

These men undertook to take care of Wild Bill.

Two against five, the trailers resumed their task.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MONSTER TO MONSTER ENDS THE TRAIL.

"We shall fetch them," said Buffalo Bill, suddenly throwing off the sadness befallen them, since they had to part company with Wild Bill. "I feel my second wind coming. Let us press on."

At the mouth of the cañon, where the river plunges into the granite jaws, they sighted the foe at last.

The group, apparently exhausted, were halted at the great barrier, which towered up, glowing with all colors, shelf above shelf, till the snowy crests were reached. Between the sides of the break, the black depths daunted them.

"It is two to five," said Bill. "There is the girl—poor thing! talk of the gila monster—it is an angel

of tenderness compared with the fiend who has dragged that delicately-nurtured girl so far."

The ground was hard to move upon. During ages, dislodged rocks had rolled down the steep and shot out upon the sandy plain.

It was emphatically desolation—red, black and white—with clays and stones cropping up at random in all shapes and sizes.

Horses could not have traversed it, and men but slowly. No wonder the party had turned at bay.

They were clearly defined on the streaked layers, while the crest of the Sierra was itself outlined by a black cloud.

The more numerous band waited the onset of the dauntless two.

Jack and Bill advanced with the cunning of Indian hunters. Every rising block was taken advantage of. On both sides, the shots were reserved as useless, and yet the two drew nearer.

Still on the heights, but descending, the hurricane was playing with the cedars as though they were feathers. Greenish glare succeeded vivid flashes of white lightning, seeming, by the deception to the sight, to leap out of the earth. These flashes set fire to the dried herbage, and patches of flame spread like mantles on the mountain side. Dashes of rain fell on these places and extinguished them as soon as blazing.

"Lors, how hot," said Texas Jack, loosening his collar.

"Fire, and charge, my boy," returned Bill. "If that is not a waterspout, then I don't want to turn that girl loose from those cusses."

At the same moment, he fired several shots from his magazine rifle as he sprang from ambush.

Jack imitated his example, but neither had any need to continue the shooting.

The enormous cloud was coming down the steps of marble, like the foot of a giant hopping to the bottom of the gorge. Behind it was toppling pinnacle after pinnacle on the summit. At each bench where they struck, they shivered and the splinters flew. The crashes were awfully loud, but surpassed by the thunder peals, which reverberated up fifty miles of the cañon.

It was then the rain bunch fell. Every dry ravine was changed to torrents; all the slabs on the steep became the gushing points for cataracts; and the watery masses dented the solid rock.



But amid all the convulsions the black cloud continued to roll and skip. At length with a terrible bound it flew upon the foothills, and, demolishing them as if glass, it burst as a waterspout upon the level.

"Come!" shouted Buffalo Bill, though only by an impossibility could he be heard in the tumult. "Let us save the girl, and then we'll fight it out."

But a stream of boiling water rushed in between him and Chiltorn, who still had two men with him. As for Texas Jack, he waded, rather than walked, toward the rock behind which Miss Mount had been placed. But, luckily, she quitted the shelter. It had ceased to be any, for the spout was pouring where it had stood, while it was carried away like an osier rod.

But at that instant, the whole space for a quarter of a mile was converted into a pool.

Everybody was carried off his feet, and by instinct, letting go of the gun in hand, each grabbed at the next object and was overwhelmed.

After a violence incredible, the storm went down. The rain stopped falling. The lake sank into the ground by a million gaping mouths. The scene was an expanse of mud; this, as the sun deluged it with burning rays, began to dry up.

Texas Jack, raising himself on the slippery ground, caked with the mire, wiped his face.

At his feet lay the insensible form of Miss Mount. He remembered he had seized her in a rush by of the stream, before it swirled round and caught him.

Here and there, amid the uprooted trees and dislodged bowlders, masked in mud, something like human figures bumped up, with broken and twisted limbs, and heads facing the wrong way.

"They are all dead," muttered Jack, falling on his knees in an attitude of prayer. "All dead but me."

"Hello!" said a voice afar.

In the calm, as contrasted with the uproar preceding it, this call struck him with pain.

And yet it should have been joy, for it was Buffalo Bill's.

Up the cañon, on an immense whitewood trunk, clean shaven of its boughs by the storm as if lopped by the sawmill, Bill was borne down into the black profundity of the cañon.

"The girl?"

"She is here—well! God forgive me for lying," added Jack to himself. "But Chiltorn?"

"Floating ahead of me! I don't go back on it. He shall be my game."

Jack stooped down; Miss Mount gave signs of life.

He raised her, searched for a place to camp; made a fire, procured food, and had a meal for the poor girl when she fully gained her senses. Then he had the dead to bury. Bill and Chiltorn were not among them. He had plenty of time to do this, and to take Miss Mount to the nearest habitation. He stopped not to recruit, but mounted a horse at Mormon Fort, and rode for the railroad. On the Southern Pacific, he stopped at the Needles.

He had planned his course. He would go up the cañons and find—he feared—the remains of his brave, devoted companion.

In the meantime, Buffalo Bill was hurried on, like the Buzzard, by the suddenly rising torrent.

Interspersed with all kinds of floating stuff, he might fear to be ground to atoms like huge logs around him.

But the vast stream subsided as rapidly as formed. He was gently deposited among the rocks and rifts, in a heap of confounded fragments.

His position was pitiable. Weaponless, his clothes, though of leather outwardly, had been ripped and he was lame from bruises. Fortunately, he had not one severe gash.

"It is no place here to scull round for clothes and weapons," he muttered, unaltered in spirit. "One good thing—Jack assured me he had rescued the girl. I'm sure of another—that all-fired demon was swept on ahead of me. I am not going to take the back trail without something to show for it. But first, to get a warm. Jack was grumbling at the heat just previous to that cataract swooping onto us. I am cool enough to go into the cold storage business."

He had not to scramble along the banks far to meet traces of a bear coming out of the den to haul in game, maimed and dead from the waterspout.

But how should he proceed? The height of the rugged sides of the rocks forbade the idea that his enemy could scale them.

So he went on, seeking along the banks.

It was tedious work. Twenty miles a day was good traveling.

A day and night passed. The loneliness would have been intolerable to one not used to the solitude.

"That man must have his head screwed on the right way, if he has not gone mad," he thought of Chiltorn.

He believed that Chiltorn was near him now, but he lay down to sleep without apprehensions, only surrounding himself with ash leaves to keep off the reptiles.

That night he slept in the Grand Cañon. Overhead the rumblings of another such storm were heard as had warned him and his foe of the dangers for



such pigmies in this playground of the gods. Oppressed by the sulphurous air, he must have slept, unlike the hunter, who listens in dreams for the hostile steps.

In the dark an unknown had come beside him, stuck the bowie of Fly Frank beside his head, and vanished. If it were Chiltorn, why had he spared him?

Only because he believed a sharper death awaited him. What plot was this devil playing?

He determined he would not sleep till this game of life or death was finished.

He looked around to see, if possible, what it was hung over him, perhaps controlled by this malignant being.

"I see nothing," he murmured.

This time, he had taken great care to select a sleeping ground with natural defenses. It was a block of marble fallen into the stream by its margin; on the side and rear, water ran swiftly; to the bankside, the cliff rose jagged but unclimbable. He had reached the block over a knifeback ledge, of loose rocks, which he had to drag himself along astride, and this he had kicked away as he advanced over it.

Before him, down stream, a wide and smooth field of white and unctuous sand extended. He was sure that it was treacherous, perhaps shifting, and he was, in the morning, startled to see a footprint upon it.

This was not a man's mark.

A long trail crossed it; a series of clawmarks with a line between them, made by the tail of some heavy, unwieldy reptile. This might have been the dragon of the fossil range, it was so large a tread.

"That is new to me," remarked Buffalo Bill, hesitating, as he had intended to go over this sand, so inviting by its smoothness to the wearied foot.

Then he looked behind him; the crest which he had "hunched" himself along had crumbled away entirely.

He was wavering when he saw Chiltorn upon the sands. He picked his way with care.

"Good-morning Mr. William Cody, of border fame," said he, stopping only a few yards away. "You will pardon my not coming nearer, but this is a quicksand, and the hard crust just ends here."

"Quicksand?"

"That is part of the reason why I spared you last night. I object to a quick and painless death—for others. You are unable to get away, for this is the only passage, and it is fatal. *Adios!* as your friend, Texas Jack, says—I am now on the way out to the railway. I shall tell a yarn of being a foolhardy tourist, lured too far by the marvels of the Colorado Wonderland. I shall soon be in Santa Fé, where I shall work the racket with the checkbook of our friend, Mount. Sorry to see nothing of the dear daughter! But she may be glad to——"

"Fly!" yelled Bill, as soon as his tongue was unglued.

Horror had seized him while the wretch was taunting. Out from between two rocks by the river had come a reptile which seemed by the color of its scaly hide and the shape of the spiteful head to be a cross of the rattlesnake and the venomous lizard of Mexico.

Its heavy tail gave it a sluggish movement, but still it advanced perceptibly over the sands, on the part where Chiltorn had trod.

The large snaky head puffed out with anger on seeing this obstacle to its movement, and a vapor, which smote Buffalo Bill as noisome where he was standing, issued from its repulsive mouth.

Chiltorn was laughing at the caution when his eye perceived this monster.

It did not stand so high that he might not have leaped over it, but, at his first start, the sand crumbled away. He was in an instant sunk to the breast in the quicksand, and, in that instant, the *escupion*, as the Coloradians call it, had fastened its fangs in his cheek.

"The gila monster! You are doomed!" cried Buffalo Bill.

"I am a dead man," yelled Chiltorn, shaking himself loose. "Help me—no, I will accept the help of no man! At least, this devil who came for me shall appear with me before its master."

Though snapped at by the hand he held out, with the other he clasped the puffy throat. Struggling, the two sank in the sands. Buffalo Bill still gazed, stupor-stricken, when they smoothed over, and of man and serpent not a trace remained.

Two days after, Texas Jack and a file of the Navajo scouts, in United States Army uniform, who had volunteered to help in the search for Buffalo Bill as an army officer, met the lone man valiantly struggling, but alive. He had been part crazed by the dreadful fate of the Buzzard chief.

Needless to say, he was restored to his old vigor by his true friend, and sighs for no realm among the cañons. He is content with the adventure of the long trail ending there.

Once a year, as the anniversary comes round of her rescue after her experience of the Deadwood coach journey, Miss Mount—who is a miss no longer, having married an American army officer—sends Buffalo Bill a present and begs to be remembered.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 42, will contain "Buffalo Bill and the Boy Trailer; or, After the Kidnapers in Kansas." The great scout soon recovered from his experiences in Colorado, and found new work to do. The story of what he considers the most exciting adventure of his life will appear in next week's issue.



## PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

The names of the prize winners in this contest are announced on page 31. We congratulate you, boys. You deserve your prizes. May you enjoy them. This contest has been a rattler, boys! Thousands and thousands of stories, and every one of them well worth reading. The greater part of them such corkers that you couldn't stop reading them if you tried, once you had begun. Every boy who has taken part in this contest, whether he won a prize or not, has a chance in the next, and a good one. In fact, we generally find that the winners in any contest are the boys who have been in previous contests. Boys who did not say die at the first defeat. If you were not in the contest that has just closed, don't let another golden opportunity slip by you, but enter the new contest right away. You know all about the new contest, of course? If you don't, then turn to page 31. Read the list of splendid prizes we offer, and then go to work. Here are a few more stories from the contest just closed. Some prize-winners, and all corkers.

### A Chapter of Experiences.

(By Thos. R. Abbott, Ont., Can.)

On the 26th of April, 1900, the famous "Hull-Ottawa" fire started. While at school I heard that Hull was on fire, and with a chum immediately rushed to the scene to watch the progress of the fire. Hull is situated on one side of the Ottawa River and Ottawa is on the other side, they being connected by two suspension bridges. The fire was raging in the mills and yards on each side of the river, just where these bridges are built. We had already crossed the bridges and were trying to get around the fire into Hull, but were repeatedly driven back by heat. At last, the fire, gaining terrible headway, started on the woodwork of the bridges. We heard a great shout from the people around the bridges, being then about three blocks away, so we started to run for dear life, but when we reached the bridge not a board was to be seen. So we (my chum and I) decided to cross on the long steel stringers.

People tried to dissuade us, but we were determined. My chum was stopped, so I started crawling alone. It was a trying experience, crawling on an eight-inch steel stringer, with a drop underneath of seventy-five feet to the "Big Kettle." The steel was scorching my hands and knees and when near the end I was so exhausted I would have toppled over had not a man grabbed me with a pike pole and hauled me to safety. I fainted, but was soon restored and told to go home. I started to run, the heat being then so great I could not stand it. When halfway down Duke street I was loudly hailed with, "Look out there, kid."

Looking around and seeing nothing, I continued to run, when just as I was passing a store doorway I was hauled in by some person. Just at that instant a telegraph pole fell crashing to the ground where I had been five seconds before. We were knocked down and bruised, but I might have been killed had it not been for the friendly hand that helped me. Thinking over it, I had just escaped being crashed to pieces on the rocks of the "Big Kettle," only to endanger myself by trying to pass under a falling telegraph pole.

### Buried in a Burning Mine.

(By W. J. Goodwyn, Evansville.)

The mine was on fire, and over three hundred miners were in deadly peril of their lives, either at the bottom of the shaft or in the different workings. Wives, mothers, sisters, brothers and other relatives of the imprisoned men with the other inhabitants of the other village were gathered around the mine with anxious feelings and blanched faces. The cage had been sent down the shaft time and time again, each time returning full of miners. Still there remained over twenty men below, who for some unknown reason were unable to ascend to safety.

There was a cry for volunteers. There was no lack of men, many of those who had escaped from what was nothing short

of a terrible death, being among the first to respond. Among them was the mine boss' son, who despite being clung to and held back by his relatives broke away.

The mine boss' son and myself were the very first among the ten volunteers to jump into the cage.

We yelled to the engineer to let her go. The cage shot down with fearful force, and soon reached the bottom amid dense smoke. At the utmost peril of our lives, and while the fire was gaining great headway, we ten men, with picks and aided with the small glimmer of their Davey lamps, hurried forward to where we knew our fellow workmen were imprisoned.

Masses of fallen coal blocked our way, but the brave men led on by the mine boss' son and myself, worked their way until they came to the spot where the solid wall of coal separated our comrades. Instantly their picks went to work, and to our intense joy we found the men for whom we were searching. One after another, more than half dead, they were dragged and carried as fast as we could take them to the cage where the two last men to leave the cage were the mine boss' son and myself.

### My Adventure with the Bees.

(By James R. Bliss, Mass.)

One fine autumnal day a party of fellows and myself started out for Camp Molly on the Sudbury River, where we were going to have a clam chowder. One of us owned a boat, and quickly rowing up the beautiful river we soon reached camp.

We then set to work, our leader designating to us the different things we had to do. Several of the fellows he sent out after wood, and then of the remaining ones he sent half of us to an Indian spring after water, while the other two fellows and myself he dispatched to a farmer's potato patch, about two miles off to get about twenty "taters" for the chowder.

We set out after much grumbling, and hurrying on soon reached our destination. We now had to use caution as we could see a bull dog near the house. Securing our "taters" all right, we started on our return trip, when my companions spotted some watermelons and persuading me to take some, we were soon in the midst of them. We had got one into our bag when we heard an unearthly yell and turned to see the dog, followed by an old man with an ancient gun, coming at full speed. We, in the meantime, had taken to our heels. I then turned my head around to behold the bull dog fasten its sharp pangs into one of my companions. The farmer seeing that he was falling behind, raised his gun and fired, and I felt a stinging sensation down my back.

We had now run about a mile, and were fagged when we approached a region called the sprout lot, which is very thick, and hard to traverse, when I struck a stone and went head first into a clump of bushes, pushing one of my hands through a wild bee hive. I was now kicking and yelling from the stings of the bees. My comrades stopped and ran back to escape the



bees, who were swarming by hundreds. Imagine me in the midst of all those bees unable to get out.

At last after fifteen minutes' hard work I managed to extract myself from the tangle of scrub oaks, and staggered away from the hive. My companions were now in convulsions of laughter over my condition. But I didn't think it any laughing matter and told them so as best I could. I was very badly swollen from the poison of the bees, which is very poisonous to me.

They then told me that the dog had been stung on the tail, and putting that member between his legs, he had put for home, which we decided to do, not returning to camp as we would be laughed at.

So starting for home, we decided that the old proverb, "The way of the transgressor is hard," was true.

### In An Overloaded Boat.

(By Earl A. Dippery, Ohio.)

When I was in Toledo, Ohio, visiting some friends one of them asked me to go rowing with him and a couple of others on the river.

I consented, and so we went out to Walbridge Park, a little south of the city on the bank of the Maumee River. There were four of us in the party and it sunk the boat we had until its gunwale was about four inches above the water. As we were coming in the main channel of the river we saw a dark-looking object floating on the surface of the water. We had a Flobert rifle with us so we began shooting at it.

One shot must have hit it, because it sank out of sight. When we were within about twenty yards of the boathouse a small tugboat passed along in front of us and as it left considerable swells behind it we were in for what I thought was a ducking. The boat danced around for a while, and all that while my heart was up in my throat, so it seemed for we were in about fifteen feet of water, and I could not swim. We got to the boathouse safely and I felt very much better.

### A Close Call in a Mine.

(By A. Dyer, Mich.)

One night about five years ago in a mine where I was employed as pumpman I met with an accident that nearly caused my death. The mine was a very deep one, and the men working at the bottom being too tired to climb the ladderway after working hard for ten hours had a habit of riding to the surface in a skip—a thing that is used to draw ore from the mine. The rule was four men to each trip, this being all the skip could hold comfortably.

On the night of which I speak, I, being one of the first ready to go to the surface, got into the skip with three others, and was just about to start, when in jumped the fifth man, overcrowding us. There were some bad spots in the shaft with just room for the skip to pass. It was at one of these places I met with an accident.

The fifth man in jumping into the skip in a hurry forgot to put out a light which all miners wear in their hats, and in trying to get his own body into safety, not caring for others, got his light beneath my face. In trying to keep from being burned and to put out the light, I moved a few inches over the skip, and in this position we came to one of the bad places, and I was caught by a piece of timber in the side of the shaft.

I gave one yell and gave myself up, but my yell was heard by one of my companions, who, without a moment's hesitation, jumped from the skip out into the ladderway. How he got there is a mystery.

It was in the ladderway the signal line was located. He succeeded in giving a signal to the engineer on the surface to stop the skip. The engineer obeyed, but not before the piece of timber which had caught me had given way, thereby saving my life.

It is another mystery how the piece of timber did not fall across the skip and overturn us all. If it had— Well, this never would have been written. It fell between the skip and the side of the shaft, almost striking some of the miners that were at the bottom awaiting the return of the skip. Some of them were so badly scared that they forgot their being tired

and ran most of the way to the surface, thinking the skip had overturned and that we would soon follow the timber.

There was no more riding for quite a while. The accident laid me up for six weeks. My ribs were badly bruised, collar bone on right side broken, and right ear almost torn off, but I was glad to get off as lightly even as that.

The man who had been the cause of the accident when we reached the surface, was found in the bottom of the skip, shaking with fear, and with the whitest face I have ever seen.

At the time of the accident I made a vow that I would never enter a mine again, and so far I have kept my word.

### A Night in the Back Woods.

(By A. Fred, Mich.)

I was walking with one of my boy friends one evening when I saw a dray passing with the carcass of a deer.

"Say, Jack," said my friend, "what's the matter with our going out to the deer country? I guess we could have some sport."

"I'll go you," I replied; "I know a place where there is plenty of game."

Next morning we secured our license and started for the woods. We took the train for a little way station and walked to the shanty about five miles distance.

The day was so far gone when we arrived, that we spent the rest of it in getting wood for the fire and boughs for the bunk.

I left the camp at daybreak next morning, leaving my friend to cook breakfast. I don't think I could have been more than half a mile from camp when I saw a fine doe coming along the trail toward me. Down I dropped behind a log, waited a moment and fired. My bullet entered her neck and killed her instantly. I cleaned her out and went back to the shanty. Breakfast was ready when I got there.

My chum had heard the shot and wanted to know what I was shooting at. It almost took his breath away when I told him.

We ate our meal together and went out and strung the doe up to a tree. Here we decided to separate, he going north while I went west.

I traveled all day slowly and silently, watching and listening until about half-past four when I spied a nice big buck about half a mile away.

I knew I could not hit him at that distance so I circled round, not heeding the time until it began to grow dark.

Then I realized my position.

My watch registered half-past five.

"Good Lord!" I muttered, "I can't get to camp to-night. I've got to hunt a place to stay."

As there was plenty of wood around I soon had a fire, the flame of which was very comforting. I worked about two hours clearing the snow away from the fire, and getting firewood. But, busy as I tried to be and work as hard as I would I could not throw off that horrible chill that ran up and down my spine. My teeth chattered and my blood ran cold as I listened to the distant howl of wolves. I kept looking at my watch and, oh, how the hours dragged! About one o'clock I put on the last of the wood and was going to get some more when I saw a pair of blazing eyes!

At first I did not know what to make of it, but I quickly recovered, and the thought that it was some animal entered my mind.

"Here's luck!" I muttered, as I raised my rifle and fired. Goodness, what a report! The whole forest seemed to be crushing and falling. The eyes had disappeared, but I dared not go to investigate. Never before did I feel myself so utterly helpless. I sat down on the log with a sigh of despair, when:

Crack! crack! crack!

Sharp and loud three rifle shots rang out on the clear atmosphere.

"Our danger signal!" I gasped. "Who can it be?" Up came my gun and bang, bang, bang, went my three answering shots. Then I went to work with a will gathering more wood and hoping that the lost hunter (for such I thought it must be) would see my fire and approach.

My hopes were realized for, far off in the forest, I caught a glimpse of a lantern coming toward me. I was feeling mighty hungry, and I sincerely hoped Mr. Who-ever-you-are had some



grub with him. As soon as he was in speaking distance I spoke to him. He came forward like a flash.

"Hello, Jack," he shouted. "Are you hurt? What's the matter? Why didn't you come back?"

"Easy, old boy," I replied, as we shook hands, "give me time. I followed a deer, lost track of time until it was too late. As I had no lamp, I had to camp here. You see, I am all right. But why didn't you stay at the shanty?"

"What?" he cried. "Do you think I could stay in the shack like a sick kitten? Well, I don't think. Why, I've imagined you laying in the snow with a broken head or a sprained ankle and I just made up my mind that you were hurt or lost—maybe both—so I took some lunch and started out with the lantern to find you."

"Well, I'm glad to see you," I cried, "and I am sure my stomach won't object to something to eat, for I am almost famished."

We sat on the log near the fire and told our stories. He told how he got a small buck after firing five shots. He had returned to the shanty and waited. As I did not appear he came after me.

"By the way," he asked, after I had finished the lunch, "what did you fire at before I came in?"

"Oh, I forgot about that," I replied. Then I told him about the eyes.

"By Jove, Jack!" he exclaimed, "I'll bet you got another one. Let's go and see."

It was a simple matter now that we had a light, so off I went, with him following. We went to the place and what did we find but a great, big owl, with one side of his head blown off. We took him to the fire and cut off the legs and wings. When I came home I carried them with me, as a reminder of my night alone in the back woods.

### Within an Inch of My Life.

(By Fulton Pace, University, Alabama.)

One evening last summer a friend of mine and I were walking leisurely along the railway track talking about various happenings of the day. We came to a long and high trestle, but thinking that no train was due at this time we proceeded to start across. Before we had reached middle ways we heard the roar of an approaching locomotive.

What should we do? To go back meant instant death, for we knew full well the engineer could not see us until it was too late. We did not have time to reach the opposite side. Suddenly an idea struck me, and it was our only hope.

We would have to hang to the cross ties and let the train go over our heads. It seemed a desperate undertaking, yet we performed it.

It seemed an age before the last car rolled over our heads. Several times I thought my arms would fail me and I should drop to sudden death. The nervous strain on me was so great I could hardly reach the opposite side, and when I did I swore never to walk another railway trestle.

### Saved by Carelessness.

(By John Willis, New York.)

The blow pits in a pulp mill are large, round tanks about fifteen feet deep and twenty feet in diameter. They are bound with iron bands. There is one door near the top. The stock is blown into them from the digesters through an iron pipe. The steam escapes through the top through a strong wooden box about five feet square which connects with the vomit boxes, then passes out through high stacks.

There are little doors in the side of the boxes through which the cleaner enters, shoveling the stock that has collected on the sides and floor along until he reaches one of the connecting boxes. He then shovels it down into the flow pits.

One afternoon I was sent up to clean out alone. The floors of the boxes are very slippery, and slant toward the connecting boxes, so it is difficult to stand.

I had just finished cleaning No. 5, and had turned to go out when my feet slipped from under me and before I knew it I was shooting down into the blowpit into about three feet of water, which softened the shock a little, but still it nearly

drove my legs out of joint. I sank down stunned into the water, which, however, soon brought me to.

Rising to my feet, I walked around the pit. I knew it would be no use to shout, and that No. 5 would blow in an hour if not sooner, and there was little chance of my being missed. Unless something happened, I would be cooked to death. I thought of my past life. Every little act that had seemed a trifle and had long been forgotten came back to me. I tried to be calm, but as I thought of my probable death I shrieked and ran about until I could hardly stand.

When I stood still I noticed that the water was deeper than at first. I listened to hear the welcome sound of gurgling water. Yes, I could hear it as it came up from the bottom. If it would only raise high enough to flood the pit some would leak out of the door and would be noticed, then the door would have to be opened to see how much water was in the pit, and I would be saved.

How I longed for the water to rise and how slow it seemed, but at last it reached the door, which was bolted so that very little could leak out. But it was enough, and the door was opened. Swimming up to it, I slid out. I had been saved from a horrible death by the carelessness of the man who had left the water on. It would have caused the pit to explode when blown. I had been in the pit one hour. No. 5 would have blown in twenty minutes and I wouldn't be writing this story if it hadn't been for a man's carelessness.

### After a Negro Robber.

(By T. L. Chintz, Miss.)

It was on Sunday night last that I was going up to my sister's house. The night was dark and the air crisp and cold.

I was just returning home, having been down town, when one of the boys cried out to me:

"Have you heard of the robbery?" he asked.

"Why, no!" said I, coming to an abrupt stop. "How did it happen?"

But none of them could give me any information, so I resumed walking, only a little faster as I had to pass there. On my way home I thought I would stop and get some information.

I met the mother and two girls at the gate, and so I asked them what was the trouble, and, womanlike, they all commenced to try to talk at once. Finally, I found that a big negro had attempted to rob the house.

"Let's get a light," I said, "and see if we can catch him."

"No," said the eldest sister, "he has gone, as I screamed when I saw him."

But the youngest of them, who is about fifteen years of age said:

"He may be in the house now."

I made the mother get a light, and while all of us except the eldest sister went in one of the rooms to see if we could find anything of the supposed burglar, the eldest stayed outside.

While we were in the room the "nigger" jumped up beside her. Girl-like, she screamed for all she was worth, and I ran out just in time to see the coon jump the fence and dart down a dark alley which was close at hand.

As I ran out of the house the light of the street lamp struck me full in the face, and I was blinded for a moment, but as soon as I recovered my sight I darted down the alley in pursuit of the coon, having an old cap and ball pistol in my hand. One of the old Claude Duval style.

I was not much afraid, so I rushed ahead to what might have been my doom, not thinking of my pistol until I was a quarter of a block down the alley.

Then thinking that I had but one charge of powder and ball in the gun I retreated in double quick time out of the alley. I didn't care to waste what little powder and ball I had by staking a shot at some tree or other (thanks to the Buffalo Bill stories), so I retreated to a safe distance.

The coon disappeared down the alley which, so to speak, was as dark as the ace o' spades, my danger was great, as it was so dark I could not see my hand before my face. And the black could have laid me out there with a piece of old iron, which lay around in abundance as he could have hid behind an old wagon which was in the alley.

I am all right now, topside up, and all is well that ends well.



# BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout; No. 14—Buckskin Sam; No. 15—Seneca Adams ("Old Grizzly" Adams); No. 16—Pony Bob (Bob Haslam); No. 17—Major John M. Burke (Arizona Jack); No. 18—Kit Carson, Jr.

## No. 19—CHARLES EMMETT.

### ("DASHING CHARLIE.")

Dashing Charlie got his frontier name from the fact that he always went into a fight with a reckless dash and utter disregard of consequences, as far as he was concerned.

Then, too, his general get-up and appearance had a certain dash about them that made the name fit him well.

He seemed fitted for a wild life on the frontier, and when he became a Pony Express Rider he quickly won fame along the Overland Trail as a reckless, dare-devil who would hesitate at no danger that lay in his way, but would dash off to face it without a moment's thought or hesitation.

His many hair-breadth escapes, which he took as a matter of course in the wild life he led, made him famous as one of the most daring riders of the Overland Trail.

Tall, slender, graceful, yet of iron frame and constitution, with long blond hair and blue eyes, fine feature and a quick, nervous manner, Dashing Charlie was one of the most picturesque of Bordermen, and his early training gave him the advantage of having grown up to a life on the frontier.

Like Buffalo Bill, Dashing Charlie was a border-born boy, he having first seen the light on the then frontier of Missouri.

His father had emigrated to the border and settled himself comfortably amid the wilds of the West.

His earliest recollection was an attack upon his father's home by a band of Indians, and, young as he was, he did all he could to aid in the defense of the cabin.

He learned to shoot a rifle and revolver when he was seven years of age, fished in the streams for his dinner, or shot squirrels and birds, and trapped for beaver.

He cannot remember when he could not ride a horse, and to keep him out of mischief when he was not five years old, his mother would put him on an old mare and turn her out to feed upon the prairie.

On one occasion night came and the old mare did not return, as was her usual custom, and that meant that Dashing Charlie did not show up, either.

In alarm, Charlie's mother went in search of him; but neither the mare nor the boy could be found.

Charlie's father was away from home until midnight, and then returned to report that Indians had been seen in the vicinity of his home that day.

In despair, Mrs. Emmett told about Charlie's disappearance, and the settler at once saddled a fresh horse, got his weapons

and rode away to arouse the neighbors, none of whom lived very near him.

With the dawn the old mare's trail was taken and soon it was discovered that she had been rounded up by Indians on horseback and driven off with other cattle stolen by them.

They followed the trail, and it was nearly sunset when the old white mare was seen coming at a gallop, and a wild shout went up as upon her back Dashing Charlie was discovered.

The mare came straight toward the settlers and halted, covered with mud, sweat and scratched by briars.

Charlie looked a wreck. His face was dirty, stained with crying, scratched by bushes and briars until it bled, and his hands and bare feet were also torn, while his clothing was in rags.

In some way in the darkness of the night before, the cute old mare had managed to elude her captors, slip away from the midst of the other cattle, and start on the back trail.

Utterly worn out, half starved and yet plucky, the boy had clung to the old mare through all that had happened.

About his adventures Charlie was not just clear, but he said that the redskins had captured old Whitey, and had asked him many questions in broken English, and then tying him on the back of the mare had taken him along with them.

He must have been asleep when Whitey bolted away from the herd, for he only recalled that she had started in a run and was shot at, for an arrow had wounded her in the back.

Charlie was mad clear through with the Indians, and said: "Me kill 'em dead some time." And the boy kept his word, for when eight years of age he was returning from school one day with other children, when two redskins halted them and tried to rob them of their ponies.

Charlie showed fight, and he not being watched, as were the other boys along who were older, he shot one of the redskins dead and wounded the other, as he fled for his life.

This act of the young hero brought on a cruel war with the tribe, who at once sent their warriors sweeping through the settlement and many whites were killed.

In an attack made on his home Charlie was known to have killed a couple of the redskins, and became an acknowledged hero even in that frontier land.

Going, when but twelve years of age, to the Colorado mining country with his uncle, Charlie saw all there was in the wild life there.

Left by his uncle alone in the little cabin one night, Charlie was surprised by the coming of two masked men who demanded that he should give them the gold they said they knew was hidden away there.



"You'll not get it," was the boy's plucky reply, and he was deaf to all threats and entreaties.

Then one of the men made a spring at Charlie, crying out:

"We'll torture you into telling where ther dust is, boy."

Charlie darted under the table and out of the cabin door, grabbing his rifle as he went.

He was fired at several times and wounded slightly in the shoulder; but he was in the dark, the men in the glare of the firelight in the cabin, and he turned and fired back at them.

Down fell one man and the other closed the door quickly, while Charlie called out:

"I've got you in a trap now, fellers."

It was very true, and the man began to beg earnestly to be allowed to get out.

But the boy told him he would kill him if he opened the door, and taking a horn from where it hung on the side of the cabin, and to be used as a call for help, he blew it loud and long.

At the first blast the miner who had put out the fire, made a dash to escape, firing his revolver as he did so, hoping to kill the boy.

But Dashing Charlie was cool, had been under fire before, and though his sleeve was wet with blood from his wound, he took good aim and shot the man through the head.

Soon after there came a dozen miners hastening to the scene, and Charlie told them what had happened and that he thought he had another dead man in the cabin.

But this man, the first one Charlie had fired on, had a broken leg and could not get away.

In vain did he appeal for mercy from the gathering miners, for he and his pard were known as desperadoes of the worst kind and he was quickly strung up to a tree with a lariat, his dead companion also suspended by his side, and left there as a warning to other robbers.

Charlie returned to the cabin, but has often said that he did not sleep well, and when his uncle got back the next day they cut down the two bodies and buried them.

Charlie Emmett remained in the mines until he laid up quite a snug sum in gold, besides having sent his mother as much more.

When he left he took his little fortune with him on the stage coach, and which was held up by road-agents and the driver killed.

But Charlie did not wish to submit to being robbed of his fortune and he showed fight, killed one of the road-agents and was himself knocked over by a bullet that struck him in the head.

When he came to he found that he had been robbed and left for dead; but the bullet had glanced upon what he was pleased to call his "iron skull," knocked him senseless, and the wound was not serious.

Charlie put the driver's body in the coach, and taking the box seat seized the reins and drove the six horses on to the next relay station.

Having lost his fortune he yet returned home and spent a year at school, studying very hard to make up for lost time.

With his schoolmates he could not but be a great hero, for his career was known; he had fought Indians, had the scars of three wounds and had killed outlaws and been a boy miner.

Again, when eighteen years of age, Charlie started for the mines to try and make another fortune.

But when on the Overland Stage Trail he learned that a large sum was being paid for Pony Express Riders by the company that had engaged to rush through the mail and light expressage from the terminus of the railroad eastward to the Pacific Coast.

Charlie Emmett at once volunteered for the hard and dangerous work, and his slender, wiry form, experience on the border, splendid horsemanship, endurance, and the fact that he knew no fear, caused him to be accepted without question.

His first run was a trail seventy-five miles eastward and back again.

It was through an undulating, wild country, with only a dimly marked trail to follow, the streams to be crossed by swimming his horse, and with the constant dread before him of being ambushed by redskins, for the Pony Express Trail was much of it through a hostile Indian country, or perhaps be held up by outlaws.

On the run Charlie rode good horses, having to change his

mount at a relay station every fifteen miles, and also keeping up a full speed pace.

His horse was lightly saddled and bridled, he was dressed in a buckskin suit, slouch hat and top boots, and was allowed to carry but one revolver to save weight, though Charlie always smuggled along a second weapon to be prepared against accidents.

The pony express pouches were of leather, and the letters and expressage could weigh just so much and was wrapped up in oil silk to keep it from getting wet.

Dashing Charlie first went over the trail to learn the "lay of the land," and reported then for duty.

He was on his first run when his quick eyes detected an object ahead on the trail.

At once he suspected an ambush, and swerving quickly from the trail, started to avoid the place of danger by a flank movement.

Seeing that they were discovered, his enemies boldly showed themselves.

They were a dozen Indians, and rode rapidly to head him off in the little valley he was making for.

But Dashing Charlie got his revolver ready and held on his way.

As he drew near he opened fire, but very deliberately.

A shot brought a pony down, throwing his rider heavily.

A second shot missed, a third shot also, but the fifth emptied a saddle.

The Indians were now close upon him, and were firing their arrows, one cutting into his hat, another piercing his boot and sticking in the calf of his leg, while three others wounded his horse.

But a chief, mounted upon a large and splendid American horse, was almost upon Charlie, when he fired his fifth shot.

The chief reeled in the saddle and dropped over on the back of his horse, while up alongside wheeled Charlie, tore off his fine headress, then his scalp, and throwing the body to the ground, he seized the rein and captured the horse, taking him along with him.

The Indians pursued with terrific yells, and an arrow again wounded his horse and Charlie knew that he had to act quickly.

Uncinching his saddle, he threw it, with the saddle pouches, upon the chief's splendid horse, and leaped to his back just as his own animal went down to die in the trail.

Then the daring pony rider drew his second weapon, and turning, opened fire upon the redskins who had begun to crowd him.

So hot and deadly was his fire that they quickly sought cover and Dashing Charlie passed on in safety.

Upon his return ride he picked up at the last relay station on his run the fine horse he had captured, and rode him in on time at the end of his trail, waving the war bonnet of the chief in triumph.

This feat made his reputation as a Pony Express Rider, and he was at once called "The Boss of the Trail."

Some time later Buffalo Bill, then a youth, but already winning fame, came as a rider to Alf Slades' Division of the Pony Express Trail, and was so fortunate as to save Dashing Charlie's life when the latter was attacked one night in camp.

Thus began the friendship between the great scout and Dashing Charlie which lasts until this day.

On one occasion Dashing Charlie while riding Pony Express, came upon the stage coach of the Overland, just halted by three road-agents.

In an instant the daring pony rider was upon them; his first shot killed the leader, another wounded a second outlaw, while the driver, relieved of the aim upon him of the robbers, killed the third.

By this act Dashing Charlie saved a large treasure on the coach, got the three outlaws' horses and a good sum they had about them, and recognized in the leader he had killed the very man who had robbed him three years before when he was returning from the gold mines.

Dashing Charlie's career as a pony rider, and later as an army scout, was a good one, and full of daring deeds.

To-day, having given up his adventurous life as a border-man, Dashing Charlie Emmett is living the quiet life of a farmer upon Long Island, and few of his closest friends know of the strange career he has led, the daring adventures of his younger years in the Land of the Setting Sun.



# THE PRIZE WINNERS!

As we predicted, boys, the recent contest was a wonderful success. It even exceeded our most sanguine expectations. No less than 8253 boys competed, making the contest bigger and more far-reaching than the previous one by a goodly number. The judges have been busily engaged in going through the huge mass of articles received, but are now prepared to announce the winners.

The winners of the first prizes, who are each awarded a Spalding Standard Athletic Sweater, are:

A. FRED, Hancock, Mich.  
CARL W. GARIHAN, Scranton, Pa.

The winners of the second prizes, who are each awarded a pair of Raymond's Roller Skates, are:

FULTON PACE, University, Ala.  
H. CASTLE, Rochester, Ind.

The winners of the third prizes, who are each awarded a pair of Winslow's Speed Extension Ice Skates, are:

HAROLD JARVIS, Bangor, Me.  
THOS. STIDHAM, 4336 Calumet Av., Chicago, Ill.  
H. STONE, Chicago, Ill.  
HODGE MASON, Los Angeles, Cal.  
HAROLD A. LAVER, Dayton, O.

The winners of the fourth prizes, who are each awarded a Spalding Long-Distance Megaphone, are:

ROY SMITH, Groton, S. D.  
RALPH P. NORRIS, 51 Decatur St., Brooklyn, N. Y.  
BERT MANHART, Evanston, Wy.  
W. J. GOODWYN, 905 Upper 1st St., Evansville, Ind.  
JIM HANNAN, Boulder, Colo.  
JAMES A. JOSE, Gorham, Me.  
JOHN WILLIS, Ausable Forks, N. Y.  
JAMES K. BLEASE, Saxonville, Mass.  
NICK H. ROBERTS, Port Gibson, Miss.  
AL DWYER, Negaunee, Mich.

*Note to Prize Winners.*—If your full address does not appear in the above list, you should send it at once to the Editor of *Buffalo Bill Weekly* so that you may receive your prize promptly.

The editor of *Buffalo Bill Weekly* desires to congratulate the winners on the high honor they have won, for it is a high honor to be the best writer among 8000 boys. And to those whose articles were so good as to almost place them among the prize winners, the editor extends his best wishes and hopes they will not lose heart, but will try again in the new contest now running.

## ANOTHER PRIZE CONTEST! MORE THRILLING ADVENTURES

**SPALDING CATCHERS' MITTS, INFELDERS' GLOVES, BASEBALL BATS  
AND LONG DISTANCE MEGAPHONES ARE THE PRIZES THIS TIME.**

### HERE IS THE PLAN

You know what exciting stories of hairbreath escapes and thrilling experiences you have been reading in the *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY* lately. You want to read more like them, don't you? Well, send them in. You have all had some narrow escape. Some dangerous adventure in your lives. Write it up just as it happened.

We offer a handsome prize for the most exciting and best written anecdote sent us by any reader of *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY*. Incident, of course, must relate to something that happened to the writer himself, and it must also be strictly true. It makes no difference how short the articles are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

### THIS CONTEST WILL CLOSE MAY 1

Send in your anecdotes, boys. We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the contest.

### HERE ARE THE PRIZES:

**THE THREE BOYS WHO SEND US THE BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a first-class Spalding Catcher's Mitt. Made throughout of a specially tanned and selected buckskin, strong and durable, soft and pliable and extra well padded. Has patent lace back.

**THE THREE BOYS WHO SEND THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a Spalding's Infielder's Glove. Made throughout of selected velvet tanned buckskin, lined and correctly padded with finest felt. Highest quality of workmanship throughout.

**THE TEN BOYS WHO SEND THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive an A1 Spalding League Baseball Bat. Made of the very best selected second growth white ash timber, grown on high land. No swamp ash is used in making these bats. Absolutely the best bat made.

**THE TEN BOYS WHO SEND US THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone. Made of fireboard, capable of carrying the sound of a human voice one mile, and in some instances, two miles. More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

**TO BECOME A CONTESTANT FOR THESE PRIZES** cut out the Anecdote Contest Coupon, printed herewith, fill it out properly and send it to *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY*, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your anecdote. No anecdote will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

### Coupon Buffalo Bill Weekly Anecdote Contest

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